

# History of Bland County





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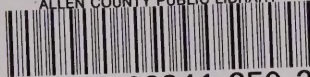
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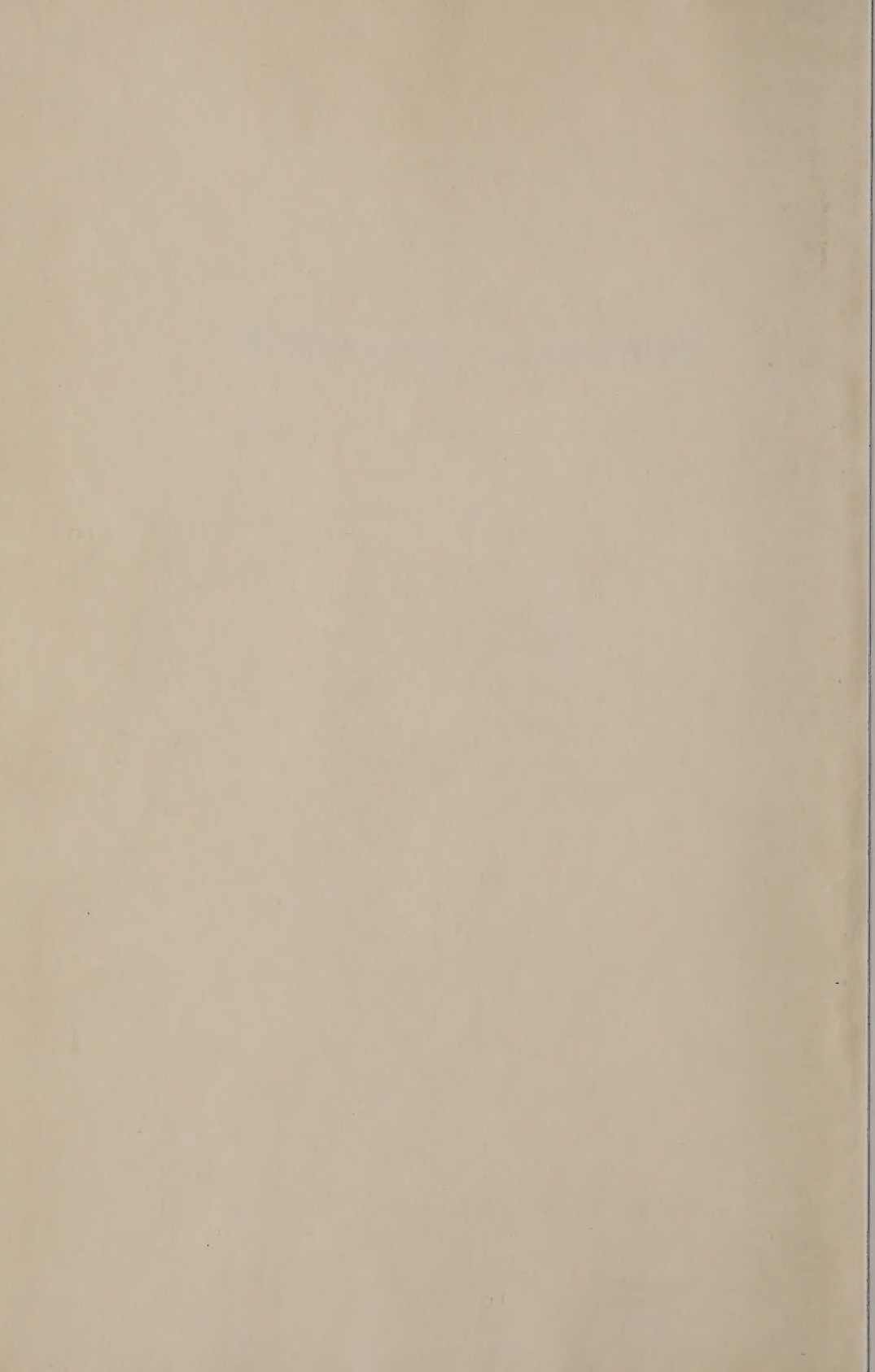


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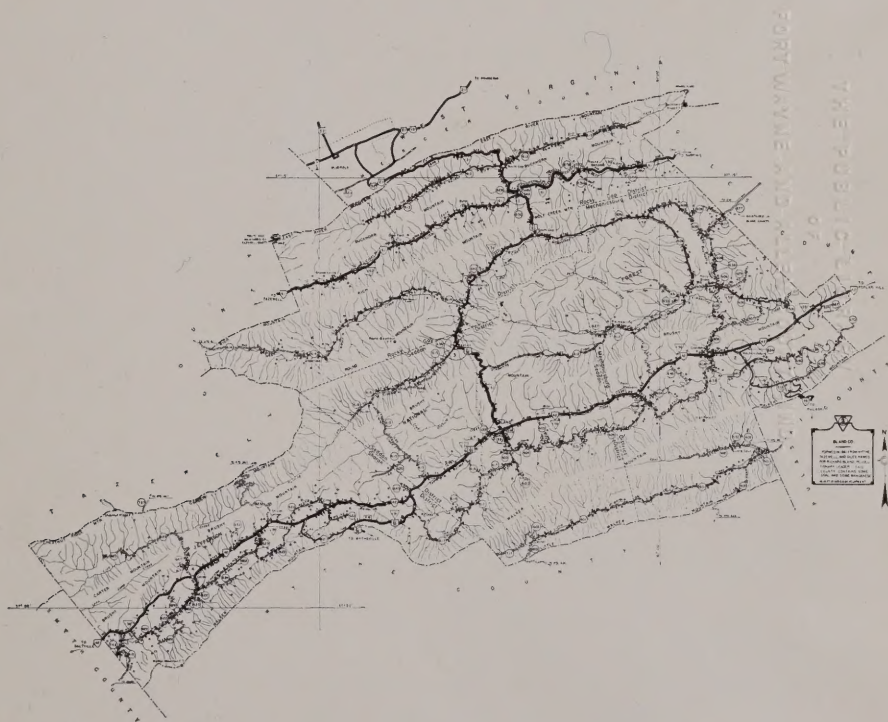






# HISTORY of BLAND COUNTY (Virginia)

By Bland County Centennial Corporation



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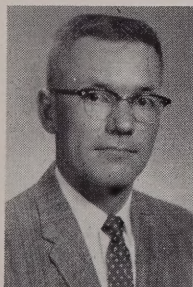
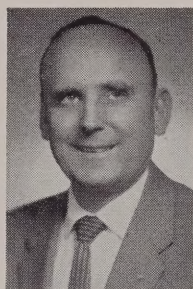
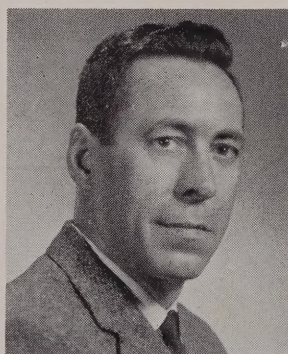
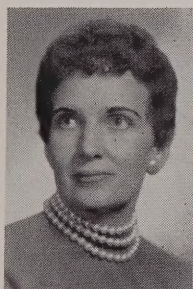
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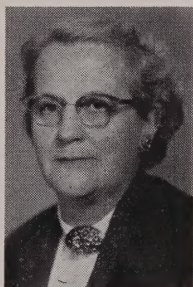
## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Many persons, past and present, have contributed information making this publication possible. Those of the past are responsible for the reference texts that have been widely used while among the present are included not only members of the various committees to whom topics were assigned, but those whose contributions have been the continued heart-warming endorsement, encouragement and enthusiasm shown for the work. To all these persons, far too numerous to mention individually, we extend thanks.

1195111



Members of Editing Committee: upper left, Mrs. Harry Bird; lower left, Mr. Jim Cox; upper right, Mr. J. M. Thomas; lower right, Mrs. Edgar R. Shannon. Above center: Mr. James O. Morehead, Chairman of Editing Committee and President of Bland County Centennial Corporation.



*Chesapeake 1000*





## DEDICATION

TO THOSE STURDY, ILLUSTRIOUS, AND EMINENT MEN AND WOMEN, FOR THEIR RESILIENT SPIRIT, INVINCIBLE DETERMINATION, AND LOVE OF GOD, TO THEM, OUR BELOVED ANCESTORS AND PIONEERS, WHO TRANSMITTED TO US OUR BOUNTIFUL HERITAGE, WE PROUDLY AND HUMBLY DEDICATE THIS PUBLICATION.





## P R E F A C E

This publication is submitted to you on this the One Hundredth Anniversary of the formation of Bland County.

In our arduous and laborious task, accomplished by interested citizens contributing and participating on a cooperative and enthusiastic basis, it was our purpose to preserve the accomplishments of those noble pioneers and transmit their heritage for which we are so humbly grateful and in which we have been so abundantly blessed.





## CHAPTER I

### THE COMING OF THE WHITE MAN

This vast country and wilderness remained virtually unexplored for some one hundred and forty-one years after the first permanent English settlement at Jamestown in 1607. The people east of the Alleghanies were vague and had indefinite ideas as to what was contained within this vast unexplored frontier and wilderness. The Canawhay Indians occupied the valley and plateau located in what is now Floyd and Carroll Counties, Virginia, and for whom the New and Kanawah Rivers were named. The Shawnees of the north and the Ohio Valley region and their ardent enemies, the Catabas and Cherokees of the southern region, fought their bitter and bloody battles and obtained their food from the bountiful forests that so sturdily surrounded them. Yet, for some unknown reason, they chose not this fair land for their permanent homes. This was their favorite, and much fought over, hunting grounds.

Buffalo, elk, deer, bear and other small game were found here in great abundance due to the fertile soil, natural food and the salt deposits in Bland and nearby Saltville. There was a constant and continuous conflict and battle among the various Indian tribes as mentioned and including the Wyandots and Delawares from the north-east over the dominion and control of this fair land that provided them with food and the necessities of life.

Prior to the beginning of the French and Indian War in 1753, the white man looked upon and regarded the Cherokees as their friends. They bartered goods and it was the Cherokees who taught us our "home remedies" in curing our ills with herbs and animal fats. The other war-like tribes were unfriendly and hostile toward the white



man and committed murder and massacres whenever and wherever possible. The few white men, women and children who represented the pioneer settlers, lived in constant and dreadful fear of the invasions by the Indians. With the influence of other Indian tribes and conflicts brought about during the French and Indian War, which ended in 1763, our once friendly Indians, the Cherokees, became hostile toward the white man and made every attempt to drive him from their native soil.

Before we can appreciate and understand the aesthetic beauty of our country, how richly we have been blessed by the acts of bravery, sacrifices, disappointments, hopes and aspirations of our forefathers, we must be ever mindful of the American Indian, his way of life and especially that he too was a human being. This beautiful land that we now call ours was once the dominion of the Red Man and over which his inherent rights gave him undisputed control and that which he would not relinquish without first leaving the stain of his own blood in this, his native soil and habitat, as a testimony to the principles and rights in which he believed.

### THE INDIAN MASSACRE AT DRAPER'S VALLEY AND THE CAPTURE OF MRS. MARY INGLES

In April 1749, the house of Adam Harman was raided by the Indians and his furs and skins were stolen. This was the first Indian depredation ever committed on the whites west of the Alleghany Mountains. In 1753 the Indians stole the skins of Jacob Harman, killed his dogs and shot the critters.

The marriage of Miss Mary Draper, age 18, and William Ingles, age 21, at Draper's Meadow in 1750 was the first marriage known in the Mississippi Valley between English-speaking people.

Mary Draper, having no sisters, had spent much of her time as a girl with her only brother in the outdoors. They played together, worked together and rode together. She could jump a fence as readily as he and could stand and jump straight up, nearly as high as her head. She could stand on the ground near her horse and leap into the saddle unaided. It will soon be seen how invaluable to her such physical training was a few years later.

Several times parties of Indians from the north of the Ohio had passed and passed again the Draper and Harman settlement to make raids upon the Catawbias, their enemies, and who lived farther south. They had made no attack upon the white settlers or given them any annoyance or cause for alarm with the exception of the thieving raid on Adam Harman. The friendliest relations had existed between the whites and the red skins up to this time but this happy condition of things was not long to last. Indeed, the Indians may already have meditated or determined upon mischief but disguised their plans by a show of friendship.

On the 8th day of July, 1755, being Sunday, and the day before the defeat of Braddock near Fort DuQuesne when all was peace and there was no suspicion of harm or danger, a party of Shawnees from beyond the Ohio fell upon the Draper's Meadow settlement and killed, wounded or captured every soul there as follows: Col. James Patton, Mrs. George Draper, Casper Barrier and a child of John Draper. Killed were Mrs. John Draper and James Cull. Those captured were Mrs. Mary Ingles, her two sons, Thomas, age four, and George, age three, and Henry Lenards.

Mrs. John Draper, being out of doors a short distance from the house, first discovered the enemy approaching and circumstances that indicated hostile intent. She ran into the house to give the alarm and to get her sleeping infant. Taking the child in her arms she ran out on the opposite side of the house and tried to make her escape. The Indians discovered her, however, and fired on her as she ran, breaking her right arm which caused the child to fall. She hastily picked the child up with her left hand and continued her attempt to escape. She was soon overtaken by the Indians and taken as prisoner. The other Indians, meanwhile, were devoting their attention to the other members of the family and camp.

Colonel Patton was sitting at a table writing when the attack was made. With his broadsword, which he always kept before him on the table, he cut down two of the Indians as they rushed upon him but was shot himself by other Indians out of his reach. He was a man of large frame, 6 ft. 4 in., and possessed great strength. The Colonel was a widower, 63 years of age and full of strength and vigor when he was killed.



Having everything in their power after the massacre and capture, the Indians secured all the guns and ammunition on the premises, all the horses and such household valuables as they could carry away. After loading up their plunder and putting the women and children on the horses, they set fire to the buildings which consumed everything that was left.

William Ingles, who was in a field some distance from the houses, received his first notice of the attack through the ascending smoke and flames of the burning buildings. He at once started toward the scene of tragedy with the hope of getting aid to his family. Upon approaching near enough to see that there was a large force of well-armed Indians, and that single handed, unarmed resistance would be useless, he turned and sought his own safety in flight. He was seen, however, by the Indians and pursued by two fleet-footed warriors, each with a tomahawk in hand. He finally succeeded in eluding the Indians and escaped to safety.

Ingles and Draper, being without arms or horses and having no neighbors at hand to join or aid in the pursuit, the Indians were able to make good their escape with their prisoners, horses and plunder. About a mile to the west they stopped at the house of Philip Barger, an old white-haired man, cut off his head and took it to Philip Lybrook where they left it and told Mrs. Lybrook to look in the bag and she would see an acquaintance.

While the Indians hunted, rested and feasted themselves at the salt springs, they put the prisoners to boiling brine and making a supply of salt to take with them to their homes beyond the Ohio. Mrs. Ingles took part in the salt making. She boiled water in some of her own pots and kettles that had been brought along on the pack horses, and she, together with the other prisoners, were undoubtedly the first white persons to ever make salt, not only in this valley but any where else west of the Alleghanies.

About a hundred years later one of her grandsons, Crockett Ingles, was for a number of years a salt maker almost within sight of the original salt spring and within a few hundred yards of where Mrs. Ingles first made salt in July, 1755.

The general course of retreat of the Indians with the prisoners and property of the Draper's massacre was down

New River but no records are available that will ascertain the exact route of retreat. Terrible as the massacre had been, the Indians were especially careful and attentive to Mrs. Ingles, who was approaching a period of maternity. Neither this, in her case, or the shattered arm of Mrs. Draper, were allowed to stand in the way of their making the trip. They were permitted to ride the horses, carry the children and make themselves as comfortable as possible. But they must go whatever the pain and suffering meant to them. On the night of the third day out, the course of nature which waits not upon convenience or surroundings, was fulfilled and Mrs. Ingles, far from human habitation and in the wild forest, unbound by walls with only the bosom of mother earth as a couch, gave birth to an infant daughter. Ordinarily such an occurrence would have been equivalent to a death warrant to the mother and the child for if they had both died, the Indians would have tomahawked them in order to avoid the trouble and the necessary delay of the journey. Owing to her perfect health and physical training, she seemed to have passed through her ordeal with almost as little suffering and loss of time as one of the wild Indian squaws themselves. She was able to travel again the next morning and did resume the journey, carrying the little girl in her arms while on horseback. Probably the reason why Mrs. Ingles and the little girl were not tomahawked was that the Indians counted upon getting a handsome sum of money for the ransom of her and the children. It was not tender humanity but cold business facts that prevailed and induced them to put up with the small additional trouble and delay for the hope of future gains. Mrs. Ingles was permitted to continue to ride and carry her small child. The Indians instructed her to bathe and poultice the broken arm of Mrs. Draper with the steeped leaves of the wild comphry plant and to dress the wound with the salve of deer fat. In searching for this wild plant in the woods, Mrs. Ingles said she sometimes wandered some distance from the camp and felt strongly tempted to try to make her escape but the thoughts of leaving her children restrained her. She determined to share their fate, hoping that by some good fortune deliverance might come to them all and that they could be saved together.

After several days of resting, feasting and making salt, the party again loaded up their pack horses and resumed their onward march down the Kanawha and down.

the Ohio to the capital town of the Shawnees at the mouth of the Sonhioto or Scioto, which was reached just one month after leaving the scene of the massacre and capture at Draper's Meadow.

Soon after their arrival at the Indian town, there was a general meeting of old and young to welcome the raiding party and to congratulate them on their success. The prisoners, according to custom, were required to "run the gauntlet"; Mrs. Ingles, however, was excused because of her physical condition. Mrs. Draper, in spite of her broken arm, was subject to the ruling. It was a great comfort to Mrs. Ingles that her children were left in her care and that she could, to some degree, care for them and promote their comfort. This, however, proved to be of short duration. It was but a few days until there was a meeting of the Indians who had made the last raid to divide out the spoils. The prisoners were all separated, as was the custom, and allotted to different owners and not again allowed to see or communicate with each other.

It was an agonizing experience to Mrs. Ingles to have her young and helpless children torn from her and each other, but the Indians and the fates had not decreed and she had to submit with what grace she could.

This Big Bone Lick is about one hundred and fifty miles below Scioto, and about three and one half miles, by the creek, from the Ohio River in what is now Boone County, Kentucky. Some of the largest bones ever discovered were scattered upon the ground and partly buried beneath the surface. Colonel Thomas Bullit and other early explorers and surveying parties in later years, used the immense ribs and tusks for tent poles and the skulls and vertebra for stools and benches. Many of these huge bones, tusks and teeth can be found in museums both in this country and in Europe. Many of the tusks were eight or ten feet long.

Here Mrs. Ingles again assisted in making salt, thus being the first white woman to make salt west of the Kanawha, since she was the first white woman in the Kanawha Valley, and perhaps the first white women who ever saw the Kanawha or New River and in addition to being the first white woman ever within the bounds of Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana.

Mrs. Ingles' eldest son, Thomas, named after his grandfather Ingles, was taken to or nearby the present town of Detroit. Her youngest son, George, named after his grandfather Draper, was taken somewhere in the interior and Mrs. Ingles was taken to the region of what is now Chillicothe. What became of the other prisoners then or afterwards is not known.

Shortly after this division of prisoners, some French traders came into the Indian town for the purpose of trading and bartering with the Indians. They had, among other things, a stock of check shirting, and as check shirts were in great demand among the Indians, and Mrs. Ingles knew how to sew, she was put to making check shirts. Her proficiency in this line increased her value and importance to the Indians, so that she was treated with unusual leniency and consideration.

When a shirt was finished, the owner would run through the town shouting praises of the "heap good white squaw." This in turn led to the Indians paying Mrs. Ingles for her part in the growing shirt business, and enabled her to supplement her own scanty wardrobe, adding to her personal comfort.

After a two or three week interval of shirt-making, a party of Indians and the Frenchmen traders were made to go up to the "Big Bone Lick" to make salt. Mrs. Ingles and a Dutch woman were among those who were taken along on this trip.

While at the Big Bone Lick, Mrs. Ingles became so desperate that she resolved to escape and if possible, to find her way home. She knew this was an almost hopeless undertaking, but she preferred even death to staying there under such distressing conditions.

Mrs. Ingles confided her secret to the elderly Dutch woman, who had been captured in Western Pennsylvania, somewhere in the region of Fort DuQuesne, and who was the only other white female in the camp. She, at first, tried to dissuade Mrs. Ingles from throwing her life away on so mad and desperate a venture. But Mrs. Ingles was not to be shaken in her resolution, and stimulated hope in the old woman of getting back to the comforts of home, and completely won her over to accompanying her on the escape.



The women prepared to start at once and made very little preparation for fear of exciting suspicion. They had each secreted a blanket, but took no clothes except what they wore, which were very scanty. They each started with a tomahawk.

The most difficult decision Mrs. Ingles had to make was what to do about her child. After much thought she decided she must abandon the child, since recapture was almost certain if she attempted to carry the infant, thus meaning death for all of them. It must have taken great courage and much agony for Mrs. Ingles to leave her child, knowing it would surely be killed as soon as it was discovered that she was gone. Who is to say that she did not act wisely?

The two escapees started late in the afternoon, heading toward the Ohio River, to get a known starting point. There were no roads and no guides and they knew little of routes, distances, or points of the compass. Their only chance was to get within sight of the Ohio River and follow that up through its long weary course, to the mouth of the Kanawha, which Mrs. Ingles felt that she could recognize, and so on up Kanawha and New Rivers to her far-off and longed for home and friends.

It is an interesting fact, as shown by census reports, that this Big Bone Lick, then unknown and in a seemingly interminable wilderness, is now almost exactly the center of population of the United States.

There were hundreds of miles of wilderness before them. The savage Indians and wild animals alike would seek their blood. Pursuit, exposure, privation, and possibly starvation were staring them in the face, but they flinched not; they had determined to start and start they did. They had not gotten far from the camp at Big Bone Lick before the sun went down and shades of night gathered around them. They selected an obscure place, raked some leaves into it for a bed and with the aid of their blankets got such rest and sleep as they could.

When they failed to return to camp at or later than the usual time, the Indians became uneasy, thinking they had strayed too far and lost their way or else had been killed by the wild animals. Some of the Indians went some distance in the direction they had started but gave up the

search that night and did not renew it the next day. Their conclusion was that the women had been destroyed by wild beasts and gave themselves no further concern about them. They did not at all suspect that the women had attempted to escape.

Day after day they dragged their weary feet along, suffering and starving. Night after night they shivered and crawled into hollow logs or hollow trees as partial protection from the cold. After a long and tortuous journey with numerous escapes from possible death, Mrs. Ingles and her companion finally arrived at what is now Giles Court House.

It is not an established fact that Mrs. Ingles touched or traversed any portion of what is now Bland County, but the possibility cannot be removed that their journey homeward passed "the mouth of Wolf Creek." Very much to her surprise and pleasure, Mrs. Ingles came upon a patch of corn. She approached it as rapidly as she could move her painful limbs. She saw no one but there were evident signs of persons about. She called out but at first there was no response. In due time, after calling again and again, she was heard by Adam Harmon and his two sons, whose patch she had found and who were in it gathering their corn.

Thinking, at first, that there might be an attack by Indians, they grabbed their guns, always kept close at hand, and listened carefully. When near enough to distinguish her voice, Adam Harmon remarked to his sons: "Surely that must be Mrs. Ingles' voice." At this moment, she too recognized Harmon and overcome with joy and relief, she fell to the ground. They carefully picked her up and carried her to their little cabin. While answering her many questions as to what they knew about her home and relatives, they warmed some water in their skillet and bathed her swollen feet and legs. Mrs. Ingles had not seen a fire, tasted food or slept in a bed for forty days since she left Big Bone Lick and captivity. When Mrs. Ingles was sufficiently recovered, Mr. Harmon put her on one of his horses, himself taking the other, and started with her to her home at Draper's Meadows and arrived about night. The next morning after arriving at her home, near the present Ingles Ferry, Mrs. Ingles begged Mr. Harmon to go back in search of the old Dutch woman who had accompanied her on her journey and escape. Mr. Harmon,

compling with her request, set out to find the old woman. After several days of searching, Mr. Harmon found her in an abandoned hunter's camp, supposedly vacated by an Indian attack, but they had left on the fire a kettle of meat to which she helped herself. Mr. Harmon, along with the woman, returned to the fort at Ingles Ferry where a joyous reunion was held. The old woman remained here for a time while awaiting an opportunity to get to her own home and friends in Pennsylvania. Finding, before long, an opportunity of getting as far as Winchester by wagon, it is not known what became of "the old Dutch woman."

It has been stated that Mrs. Ingles, upon arrival at her home, had a joyous meeting with such friends as she found there, but the two of all others of whom she had hoped and expected to find there, her husband and her brother, were not there. They had gone, some weeks before, down to the Cherokee Nation in the Tennessee and Georgia region to see if they could get any information on their lost family, and, if so, through the Cherokees, with whom they were friendly, to ransom and recover Mrs. Ingles. Their expedition proved fruitless and they were returning disappointed and sad. On the night that Mrs. Ingles reached her home at Ingles Ferry, William Ingles and John Draper stayed within a few miles of Newbern, in what is now Pulaski County. Next morning they made a daylight start and arrived at the Fort at Ingles Ferry to find, and much to their surprise and joy, Mrs. Ingles. Such a meeting after nearly five months can be imagined. Though William and Mary Ingles were rejoiced to be restored to each other, their happiness was saddened by the bitter thought that their helpless little children were still in the hands of savage Indians. And while John Draper was overjoyed to have his sister return, he could not forget that his wife was still in the far-off-wilderness, in the hands of savages, and her fate unknown.

## EXCERPTS FROM HISTORY OF TAZEWELL COUNTY AND SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA

(by William C. Pendleton)

Thomas Ingles, as previously mentioned, was the son of William and Mary Ingles and was one of the captives taken at the Draper's Meadows massacre in 1755. He was carried with his mother and the other prisoners to the

Shawnee towns in Ohio and was adopted into an Indian family where he remained for thirteen years. His father went to Ohio in 1768 and ransomed Thomas by the payment of one hundred and fifty dollars and brought him to his home in Ingles Ferry on New River which is situated about one mile south of the present town of Radford. His kinsman, Dr. John P. Hale, in his *Trans-Alleghany Pioneers*, says of Thomas Ingles: "He was very much of a wild Indian in his habits when he first returned"; and: "Notwithstanding he was petted, humored and caressed at home; a wild fit would overcome him now and then and he would wander off into the wilderness with his bow and arrow and stay for days at a time. When he returned he would give no account of himself or explain his conduct.

His parents were anxious to have him educated and sent him to Albemarle County where he was placed under the care of Dr. Thomas Walker, the explorer, surveyor and agent of the Loyal Company. There was a school for young men in the neighborhood of "Castle Hill," Dr. Walker's residence. While attending this school, young Ingles made the acquaintance of Miss Eleanor Grills; they became sweethearts and were married in 1775.

Shortly after his marriage, his father gave him a tract of land on Wolf Creek, in the present counties of Giles and Bland, and then moved to Abb's Valley where he settled on the one thousand acres tract his father had purchased from the Loyal Company. After a residence of a year in Abb's Valley, Ingles became alarmed for the safety of his wife and children because of the nearness of his home to the trail up the Tug Fork of Sandy and Bluestone. This trail had been used by the Indians for the raids they had made to the headquarters of the Clinch and the upper New River Valley and was considered one of the most dangerous on the frontier. He then located with his family in Burke's Garden on the tract of land where James Burke had once lived and occupied the house Burke had built. His father, William Ingles, had secured from Burke the right to four hundred acres of land which he had gotten from either Colonel Patton or the Loyal Company. There was but one other white man living in the Garden, Joseph Hicks. He was a bachelor whose cabin was two miles from the Ingles home.

Though Ingles had moved to the Garden for safety, in April, 1782, a large party of Shawnees, led by the noted



Chief, Black Wolf, entered Burke's Garden. They concealed themselves until Ingles went out on his farm to work and then surrounded his home and made his wife, their three children and a Negro man and woman prisoners. After taking as much loot as they could carry, the Indians started with their booty back to Ohio. The cries of the captives attracted the notice of Thomas Ingles and his Negro man while they were plowing in a field. They abandoned their plows and started on a run to investigate the trouble. Seeing a number of Indians, and having no guns, Ingles realized that he could do nothing for the relief of his family. He and the Negro ran back to the plows, unhitched their horses, and started to the nearest settlement to get assistance. Knowing that the Indians would make their way to the head of the Clinch, Ingles decided to go in another direction and crossed the mountain to the nearest settlement on the North Fork of the Holston, now Bland County.

It happened to be muster day for the Washington County militia and the settlers on the North Fork of Holston River had assembled and were being drilled by Captain Thomas Maxwell, who had formerly lived at the head of Bluestone, in Tazewell County. Maxwell, with a party of fifteen or twenty volunteers, went with Thomas Ingles to Burke's Garden to pursue the Indians and rescue the captives.

Joseph Hicks and his Negro man were on their way to the house of Thomas Ingles the morning the attack was made. As soon as Hicks discovered the Indians, and saw what had happened, he and his Negro retreated rapidly. They crossed Burke's Garden and Brushy Mountain on foot to a small settlement in the present Bland County for help. It is not known who the settlers were in Bland County, since no mention has ever been made of he names; however, it is evident that such a settlement of early pioneers lived at what is now called Sharon Springs at the head of the Holston River and where the Sharon Springs College was later located.

At any rate, Hicks secured six or seven men from Bland who returned with him to the Garden and arriving there about the same time that Thomas Ingles and Captain Maxwell got there with their party. The two forces were united and went in immediate pursuit of the savages. Captain Maxwell was put in command of the whole party,

and trail of the Indians was first struck at the head of the Clinch. Some of the settlers from the Clinch and Blue-stone joined the pursuit. The trail of the Indians was followed with great care and caution. It was feared that the captives would be killed if the savages found or discovered that they were being followed. On the fifth day after the capture the advance scouts of the white men discovered the Indians, who were camping for the night in a gap of Tug Mountain. A consultation was held by the pursuers and it was agreed that Captain Maxwell should take half of the men and during the night get around to the front of the Indians and Thomas Ingles should remain with the other half at the rear. At daybreak a simultaneous attack upon the savages would be made by the two divisions. Consequently, the party with Maxwell lost their way and did not reach the front by daylight. Maxwell, having failed to get to his appointed place on time, and the Indians, beginning to arouse from their slumber, Ingles determined to make an attack with his men.

As soon as the first shot was fired by Ingles, some of the Indians began to tomahawk the prisoners, while others fought and fled. Thomas Ingles rushed in and seized his wife just as she had received a terrible blow on her head with a tomahawk. She fell, covering the infant of a few months, which she held in her arms. The Indians had no time to devote to it. They had tomahawked his little five-year-old daughter, named Mary, after her grandmothers, and his little three-year-old son, named William, after his grandfather. His Negro servants, a man and woman, captured with his family, escaped without injury.

In making their escape, the Indians ran close to Captain Maxwell and party, and firing on them, killed Captain Maxwell, who was conspicuous from wearing a white shirt. The whites remained on the ground until late in the evening, burying Captain Maxwell and Thomas Ingles' little son, who died from his wounds during the day. Mrs. Ingles and the little girl were still alive although badly wounded. It is not known definitely whether any of the Indians were killed or wounded, but while the white remained on the scene they heard groans from the adjacent laurel thickets that seemed to be made by persons who were suffering or dying. After burying the dead and giving such attention as was possible to the wounds of Mrs. Ingles and her little daughter, Mary, the party began its return march to

the settlement. Owing to the critical condition of Mrs. Ingles and her little daughter, the party had to move very slowly.

William Ingles, father of Thomas, received the news of the capture of his son's family a few days after it occurred and he immediately left his home on New River, and by way of Bland County, proceeded to Burke's Garden. Realizing that there would be dire need for surgical attention, he took with him the best surgeon he could get in the New River settlements. He reached Burke's Garden shortly after Thomas Ingles and his wife and children arrived there. The surgeon was more successful with the case of Mrs. Ingles. He extracted several pieces of bone from her skull and treated the wound so skillfully that she was able to travel on horseback in a few weeks, and with her husband and baby, returned with William Ingles to his home at Ingles Ferry. Very soon thereafter, Thomas, with his wife and infant daughter, moved to Tennessee and settled at what is now Knoxville.

### **MRS. BETTIE DRAPER IS RANSOMED BY HUSBAND, JOHN DRAPER**

Mrs. Bettie Draper was still a prisoner among the Indians. When separated from Mrs. Ingles at Scioto, she was taken up to about the Chillicothe settlement, where she was adopted into a family of an old Chief who had recently lost a daughter. Although kindly treated, she, not long after, made an attempt to escape. She was recaptured and condemned to death by burning, the usual penalty in such cases. The old Chief concealed her for a time and by his authority and influence at length secured her pardon.

Finding escape impossible, she set to work earnestly to secure the favor and regard of the family and the tribe so as to render her terrible fate as tolerable as possible. She taught them to sew and to cook and was ever willing and ready as a "heap good medicine squaw." By these means she soon acquired the good will and confidence of the tribe, and secured for herself very kind and considerate treatment.

Thus six weary years had passed since her capture, and since her parting from Mrs. Ingles at Scioto. During this time, John Draper had personally made several trips and many times sent agents to try to find and ransom her. In 1761 a treaty between the whites and Indians was held somewhere on the border about the close of the Cherokee war, the locality and details of which are not clearly known. John Draper attended this treaty, met the old Chief in whose family his wife was living and after much negotiation and a heavy ransom, he succeeded in effecting her release and restoration to him, when immediately the couple set out on their return to their homes at Draper's Valley.

### **FIRST SETTLEMENTS WEST OF THE NEW RIVER**

The Draper's-Meadows-Ingles' Ferry settlement was an outlying, advanced post of civilization and on the edge of the then great Western Wilderness, and soon became a rendezvous and point of departure for individuals and parties bent on Westward movement, exploration, immigration or speculation.

This way passed Dr. Thomas Walker and his first party of explorers in 1748 and also his second expedition in 1750. From here, in 1754, the first four or five family settlements that are known to have been made, departed from Draper's Meadows and proceeded west of New River. James Burke went to Burke's Garden in the county that is now known as Tazewell. It is not known whether or not he was accompanied by others.

### **GEORGE INGLES RANSOMED BY FATHER (Trans-Alleghany Pioneers — Ch. XXII)**

The first information of material value regarding the two sons of Mary and William Ingles, who were taken prisoners at the Draper's Valley massacre in 1755, was through Mrs. John Draper (Bettie) upon her return from captivity. By mere chance, acquaintance was made with a William Baker who had recently been released by the Indians as a prisoner and who had been held in captivity by the Shawnees in the Scioto Country.



According to Mrs. Draper, George Ingles, the youngest child and age three when captured by the Indians at Draper's Meadows, had died not long after taken from the tender care of his mother at Scioto. However, according to Baker, he had lived in the same village with the Indians who had adopted George as their son. William Ingles at once bargained with Baker to go back to the Indian country and ransom his boy and bring him home.

Baker went down the Valley of Virginia by Staunton to Winchester and thence down the Ohio to Scioto. He found the Indians and made known his intentions. After much negotiating he succeeded in purchasing the boy and paid about one hundred dollars in ransom. The boy, George, was not at all pleased with the transaction and arrangements. He knew nothing of the white parents they told him about. He knew only his Indian father, mother, brothers, sisters and playmates, and last, but not least, his Indian sweetheart, or pretty little squaw, and he did not want to be sent away from them.

Partly by coaxing and promises and partly by force, Baker got him started but kept him bound until they got forty or fifty miles away from the Indian village. As they passed by, the dusky little Indian maidens would try to persuade him not to go or begged him to come back to them. The little fellow could not withstand their appeals unmoved and determined to escape. Finally Baker ceased to bind him at night, but only took him in his arms when they first went to sleep, thinking the boy could not get out of his embrace without awakening him. When he awoke one morning, however, he found to his surprise and chagrin that the boy was missing.

Fearing to go home and report his misfortune and carelessness and the loss of the boy to his parents, Baker went all the way back to the Indian village to try to recover him. The squaws had concealed him and refused to give him up. Baker, at last, had to go home without him.

This was a sad disappointment to his parents and especially to his mother whose heart had been so strongly yearning for her long lost child. They had found him and must recover him. William Ingles determined to go for him, himself, and hired Baker to go back with him. They started and pursued the same route as had been previously followed by Baker. When they had advanced as far as

Fort Pitt, they found that hostilities had broken out between the whites and the Indians and it was not possible to continue on their journey. With deep reluctance they abandoned their journey and returned home to await the restoration of peace.

It proved to be more than a year before it was considered safe to renew the journey and attempt to recover the little boy, George. Baker and William Ingles again started out on the same journey to Scioto. When they arrived at the Indian town, they discovered that the Indian father of the boy, along with the boy, had gone to Detroit and would not return for several weeks. This was again a great disappointment but there was nothing else to do but wait.

A very unwise move on the part of William Ingles almost cost him his life. Knowing the fondness for strong drink by the Indians, he had taken along with him a keg of "firewater," in addition to some money in order to induce the Indians to release George. While awaiting the return of the Indians from Detroit, he gave some of the Indians some of the rum to make "fair weather" with the Indians at Scioto. He soon saw the mistake that he had committed but it was too late to correct it. The Indians, having their appetites inflamed by the small allowance, determined to have more. They seized his rum, drank it all, and were soon wild with rage and intoxication. They threatened to kill him and were about to put their threats into execution when an Indian squaw came to his rescue and no doubt saved his life. They hid him and kept him concealed until the Indians recovered from their drunken spree and recovered their sober senses.

When the Detroit party returned, the Indian father and boy came home with them as expected. Much to the relief of William Ingles, the little boy took to him kindly at once. The terms of his surrender were then negotiated between the Indian father and William Ingles, who paid the sum of one hundred fifty dollars for the boy's release. All these conferences and negotiations were conducted through Baker, who could speak both English and the Indian language. The boy had lost all knowledge of his mother's tongue; his Indian father could not speak English, and his real father, William Ingles, could not speak the Indian tongue. Arrangements being completed, there was a general good feeling all around. The boy made his farewell to

all his friends and started to his far-off home with his new father and Baker. After many weeks of tedious travel, they arrived home at Ingles Ferry. In addition to finding his mother, he found four little relatives to give him affection. This was in 1768 or thirteen years after his original capture in Draper's Meadows in 1755, which made George sixteen years old at the time of his return to his native people and Ingles Ferry where his parents had later moved.

His behavior disturbed his mother who feared that someday he would return to the Indians, and that she would never see him again. He soon, however, learned to speak English but was very slow to learn to read and write. He often interested his family by relating incidents of his life with the Indians. Once, while quite young, and after learning how to use the bow and arrow, he tried to shoot a woodpecker from a tree near the Indian camp. He became so interested in what he was doing that while walking backwards to get within range, he stepped into a bed of hot coals the Indians had to cook their food on. His feet were burned so severely that they never grew to normal size.

William Ingles( the elder) died at Ingles Ferry in the prime of life in the fall of 1782, aged fifty-three. Mrs. Mary Draper Ingles, his widow, lived to a ripe old age, dying also at Ingles Ferry in February, 1815, in her eighty-fourth year.

(Taken from  
**THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF WILBURN WATERS**  
by Charles B. Coale)

Wilburn Waters, the famous hunter and trapper of White Top Mountain, writes of Mr. James Burk, the discoverer of that magnificent valley high up among the mountains in Tazewell County, Virginia, which still bears his name and is called Burk's Garden. After discovering the Garden and for several years before moving his family there, Mr. Burk was in the habit of visiting this spot for the purpose of grazing his stock and hunting. One season Mr. Burk and two companions remained later than usual

while tanning some hides. This was about the period that the Shawnees, under the leadership of the great chief Cornstalk, were making insursions as far eastward as the Shenandoah Valley.

The weather became quite cold before the three men were able to start for the settlement on New River. Having crossed the mountain forming the northern boundary of the Garden, with several pack horses loaded with rolls of leather, night overtook them at what is now known as Sharon, a beautiful watering place in Bland County. Instead of following the custom of those days and camping out, they took refuge in a crude structure of logs that had been built for the protection of hunters and graziers in cold and stormy weather. Tying their horses to the trees, and throwing their rolls of leather on the floor, they started up a fire in the hut, partook of their simple meal and laid down to rest. Hearing a strange noise during the night, and supposing something to be the matter with one of their horses, one of the men who happened to be awake at the moment, arose and looked out, but seeing nothing and that the horses were all quiet, he returned to the fire and soon fell asleep again.

The men arose at an early hour, went out to feed their horses before starting on a long day's travel through unbroken wilderness, and were astonished to find one of the horses dead, having been stabbed with a large knife during the night. This and other indications were definite evidence that the Indians had been there while they slept. Burk and his companions were puzzled to conjecture why the marauders had not made an attack upon them, as there were but three of them, and all sleeping soundly from the fatigue of the preceding day. They hurriedly gathered up the balance of their horses, packed on the rolls of leather and started along the trace, expecting to be surprised and perhaps murdered by the Indians. They had gone but a mile or two when they came upon a campfire in the woods, and were startled at the sight of the bodies of three white men, who had been murdered as they slept, and scalped, apparently but a few hours before.

The death of the horse had pretty well satisfied them that Indians had been lurking about, but now they had no doubt but that there was a party of Cornstalk's scouts on the warpath. They disposed of the murdered men as



best they could under the circumstances, and hurried on to the next settlement and gave the alarm.

The presence of an Indian, like that of a mad dog in New England, instantly roused the population, and it was but a very short time till scouting parties were out and on the trail. One of the parties came upon the Indians, five or six in number, the next day on Walker's Creek in Bland County, and killed all but one, who escaped their fire, but who was subsequently captured. He revealed to his captors that his party had followed Burk's trail, gone to his camp about midnight, peeped through the logs of the hut to see how many were there, and mistaking the rolls of leather lying about on the floor for so many men, had concluded the party was too strong to attack unless they were asleep, and killed the horse to see if the noise would arouse them. The circumstance of one of Burk's companions looking out when he heard the noise led the Indians to believe that the whole party were awake, and hence they passed on to the other party whose trail they had seen, and murdered and plundered them. The rolls of leather saved Burk and his companions that night, but he and his family were murdered by the Indians a few years later.

About this period, there was a family living on Walker's Creek, in what is now Bland County, by the name of White. During one of the predatory incursions of the Indians, they captured and carried off a little boy belonging to the family. A number of years later, during one of the expeditions of General Clarke to quell the Indians in Kentucky, he had encamped on the bank of the Ohio awaiting the return of scouts who had been sent out to reconnoitre. One of his men by the name of White, from Walker's Creek, and brother of the boy that had been stolen, was out a short distance from camp in search of game when he saw a solitary Indian sitting on a log mending his moccasins. His first impulse was to shoot him, as all the Indians in that region were hostile, but fearing the report of his gun might start up a score of redskins in the vicinity, and as the back of the savage on the log was toward him, he concluded to approach stealthily and capture him alive. He did so and took him into camp. From his hair and other indications they supposed him to be a white man, and after compelling him to scrub the paint off, their suspicions were confirmed and they subsequently learned through an interpreter — as the captive had for-

gotten his native language — that his name was White, had been stolen by the Indians from his home in Virginia when a child, and eventually proved to be the brother of the man who captured him and came so near taking his life.

The brothers lived many years, settled in Kentucky, and he who had been so many years among the Indians was a delegate in the Legislature in the early organization of the State.

### CAPTIVITY OF THE DAVIDSON FAMILY

Andrew Davidson, who, with his family, resided near what is now Rocky Gap, Bland County. Because of business of importance, Andrew Davidson left his house and because of the nature of his business, planned to be away from home for several days. His horse was ready saddled, and kissing his wife and children bade them adieu for a season, promising to make all speed and return. Long and anxiously did the kind-hearted mother look at his retiring form. But as he passed from her sight, she turned again to her children and silently wept over them as if she felt the desolation of her situation. The family consisted of the three children of Mrs. Davidson, two girls and a boy, all small, and a bound boy and girl, orphans, whose parents were Broomfields.

The bound children were between the ages of seven and ten, and, of course, were of little help to Mrs. Davidson. At the time of this incident, 1789 or 1790, the women of western Virginia shared in the more laborious part of the household toil and when their husbands were absent performed such labors as were performed by their husbands.

Several days had elapsed since the departure of her husband when Mrs. Davidson found her doors suddenly darkened by the swarthy forms of several Indians, who, speaking English, told her she must go with them to their towns in the west. There remained no alternative to her, though her situation was such as almost to prevent the possibility of her performing such a trip. She took up her youngest child, the Indians taking the others, and left the house to try the realities of Indian captivity, of which she had heard much said. They had not proceeded far when they relieved her of her burden; one of the Indians

took her child, and, unexpectedly to her, carried it on in safety. The exertions and anxiety of mind undergone by Mrs. Davidson was the cause of an addition of numbers to the captives. Two hours relaxation from the march was sufficient rest in the estimation of the Indians and again they pushed on. The new-born infant was carried by one of the Indians, and after a day's time was drowned on account of apparent or real disposition.

The Indians who captured Mrs. Davidson were more humane than she had expected. They seemed to pity her and showed her every leniency that could be asked for under the circumstances. When they arrived at the Indian town, quite a different fate awaited them. The two little girls were tied to trees and shot before her eyes. The little boy, her son, was given to an old squaw, who, in passing over a river upset her canoe and he was drowned. What became of the bound boy and girl was never known.

Mr. Davidson, two years after, during a time of peace, went to the Shawnee towns to look for his wife who had been sold to a French gentleman. Mr. Davidson made inquiries about his wife but could learn nothing of her fate. An old Indian, who no doubt pitied him, told him that if any Indian in town knew of her whereabouts he could not be told as they would have to refund the price paid for her in case she had to be given up. But that if he (Mr. Davidson) would go home they would find out where his wife was and inform him. Mr. Davidson returned home thinking that the Indian would never keep his promise.

In a short time after Mr. Davidson returned home, the old Indian conveyed the information to him and he set out a second time in search for his wife, which was toward Canada and where it was related that she could be found. When he arrived at the Canadian settlement, he stopped at the house of a wealthy French farmer to get a meal's victuals and to inquire the way to a place where he had learned that his wife could be found.

He noticed a woman as she passed him upon entering the house, but merely bowed to her as he entered. After asking for his dinner he seated himself and was perhaps thinking of the chances of finding his wife when again the woman entered. She laid down her wood that she was carrying and looked at the stranger for a brief moment and returned to her mistress and said: "I know that man."

"Well, who is he?" the French lady inquired.

"It is my husband. Andrew Davidson, I am your wife."

Mr. Davidson could hardly believe his senses. When he had last seen her she was a fine, healthy-looking woman; her hair was as black as coal, but now her head was gray and she looked many years older than she should have looked. Yet, it was she, though he declared nothing seemed to indicate she was Rebecca Davidson.

Soon the French gentleman returned and being a humane man, gave up Rebecca to her husband as well as a considerable sum of money. The next morning Mr. and Mrs. Davidson set out on the long and treacherous journey to Rocky Gap and their home.

(Excerpts from: Bickley's History of Tazewell County, Virginia. Pages 431 and 432 of Annals of Tazewell County by John Newton Harman).

## **CONDENSED STATEMENT OF THE CAPTIVITY BY THE INDIANS AND ESCAPE OF JENNIE WILEY**

### **From "The Founding of Harman Station"**

Perhaps before 1760, a colony of which Hezekiah Sellards was a member, settled about Walker's Mountain and Walker's Creek in the present Bland County, Virginia. This colony was beset by Indians for about thirty years.

In 1779, Thomas Wiley married Sellard's daughter, Jennie. Wiley purchased a tract of land from Mathias Harman on Walker's Creek, immediately north of the residence of Harman, and built a cabin thereon about one mile distant from Harman's house.

After a battle with the Indians hereinbefore described, Mathias Harman, surmising that the Cherokee chief who was defeated in this fight, would push on to the Walker's Creek settlement to wreak vengeance upon the settlers and particularly upon his own home, hurriedly returned to protect the settlers. But the Indians had reached the settlement and attacked the Wiley home, thinking it was that of Mathias Harman. They killed Mrs. Wiley's brother,



15 years old, and three children; and took Mrs. Wiley and fifteen months old child and started on a hasty retreat to their home north of the Ohio River. It was subsequently learned that the attacking party was composed of two Cherokees, three Shawnees, three Wyandots, and three Delawares: a total of eleven Indians. The Cherokees insisted that Mrs. Wiley and her child be killed at once and an attack be made on Harman's cabin. The Shawnee chief contended for his right to take the captive and carry her



to his town. He was permitted to retain her for the time being. Mrs. Wiley's dog was permitted to follow.

After leaving Wiley's house, the Indians took a general course leading to the head of Walker's Creek. They followed mountain ways and short cuts from one valley to another, coming to Brushy Mountain which they crossed to the head waters of Wolf Creek. When the night was far advanced they halted in large rock house in the range between Wolf Creek and Bluestone River. There they made a fire under the overhanging rock and broiled some venison which the Cherokee took from a pack he carried by thongs on his back. They made a hasty meal of this venison, which appeared to refresh them all; and when the rain ceased they again set forward after extinguishing the fire and concealing, as far as possible, all traces of its existence. It was still quite dark. The dull dawn found them on the head waters of the Bluestone, branches of which river they waded as they came to them, though all were running high from recent rains. They crossed the Great Flat Top Mountain and ascended the south end of one of those ridges lying in the watershed between Guyandotte and Tug Rivers. This rough range extends almost to the Ohio. The great Indian trail up the Tug River often followed along its tortuous and uneven crest and from that cause it was long known as Indian Ridge, especially in its southern reaches.

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The Indians made no halt during this day's travel until late in the afternoon when, believing themselves beyond any immediate danger of being overtaken by the whites, they made a camp in a rock house in the head of the creek below the crest of the mountain. They had not killed any game during the day, though both bear and deer were in sight more than once. Their meal consisted of venison from the pack of the Cherokee. This venison was dried until hard, but the Indians held it in the flames of their campfire until it was cooked a little, then they ate it. Mrs. Wiley ate some of it, also, some parched corn from the wallet of one of the Indians. She was exhausted with the long and rough march of twenty-four (24) hours she had been forced to make. She had climbed mountains and waded streams; she had forced her way through thickets of laurel and ivy, and had tramped through quagmires and over stones; she had been compelled to ascend almost perpendicular cliffs and to descend sheer precipices. Much of the time she had been drenched to the skin. Her child

was in great distress and had cried until it could cry no more because of hoarseness. At this camp she saw the warriors make hoops of green boughs and over them stretched the scalps of her brother and her children. In after life she often declared that at no other time did despair so take hold of her as it did this second night of her captivity.

When the Indians lay down to sleep they bound Mrs. Wiley with strips of raw deer skin. She was in a state of nervous delirium and could not sleep, neither could she rest. Every time she closed her eyes she seemed to behold the slaughter of her children anew, and more than once she shrieked aloud. Her cries aroused the old Shawnee, who finally unbound her. He lighted a torch and carried it into the woods, returning soon with some leaves from which he made an infusion in a small vessel he carried. He gave her some of this preparation to drink, after which she fell into a troubled sleep that continued through the night.

The Shawnee chief aroused Mrs. Wiley before dawn. The Indians were preparing to depart. She was given some corn and venison for the morning meal, and the whole party again set forward. The mountain streams were running bank full from the recent rain, and the Indians avoided them as much as possible by keeping to the paths which followed the ridges. It was with much difficulty that Mrs. Wiley could proceed. She was urged by the Indians to quicken her pace, but her progress was slow and painful. The only thing which enabled her to drag herself along was the fear that if she failed to keep up with the Indians they would kill her child. More than once was this proposed by the Cherokee Chief and it was acquiesced in by all the band save the old Shawnee. As the day advanced the reserve forces of her strong constitution came to her aid and she made better time, but her marching was not satisfactory to the Indians.

When the Indians were starting out this morning they sent two of their number back over the trail to keep watch for the whites, for they were confident that the hunters would follow them. Some of the younger members of the band believed the heavy rains had washed out their trail, but the Cherokee said such was not the case, especially if they should be followed by Mathias Harman. This was one of his strong arguments in favor of killing Mrs. Wiley's

child. It was with difficulty that the old Shawnee withstood the demands of the Cherokee Chief.

At the end of this day's march an encampment was made in a location much like that of the preceding night. The Indians halted before the sun went down because one of their number had killed a fat bear at the time, and they feasted most of the night. Though the march had been severe, the distance passed had been much less than was covered during the same time of the day before, and Mrs. Wiley's condition had improved somewhat; but her feet were terribly bruised and blistered. She had little hope that her child would live through the night. There being nothing better at hand she rubbed it well with bear grease, and at the suggestion of the Shawnee chief forced it to swallow some of the melted fat. This seemed in a measure effective, for the morning showed improvement in the child's health. The Shawnee chief made a concoction of some leaves boiled with the inner layers of the bark of the white oak, which he caused Mrs. Wiley to apply to her feet, and which gave her immediate relief. An additional application in the morning caused still further improvement, and this, together with the improved condition of her child, caused Mrs. Wiley to begin the day with more hope than she began the previous one. The party left the camp before it was light and continued the journey in the direction of the Ohio. A heavy rain had fallen in the night, and it rained most of the day. A terrific storm of wind and rain drove the party under a cliff shortly before darkness came on, and they built a fire and camped there. The camp was in the hills just west of the head of Twelve Pole Creek. The Indian scouts who had been sent back each day reported late at night, and here they said they had seen no pursurers on their trail.

The Indians left their camp, as was their custom, on the following morning before it was light. Insufficient food and the continuous marching was rapidly exhausting Mrs. Wiley, and she found herself unable to move forward so rapidly as on the previous day. She was failing under hardships and the burden of her child. The Shawnee chief warned her of the consequences of failing to keep up with the warriors. But, try as she might, she could not satisfy her captors.

The Indians who had been sent back as scouts this morning returned late in the day and reported that they



had seen a large party of white men on horseback following their trail. This was not unexpected intelligence, but the Indians discussed earnestly what it was best to do in the matter. Some proposed an ambush of the white man, but this was not taken as the best course to follow. The Cherokee chief proposed the immediate death of the child and a change of course. Mrs. Wiley promised to keep up with the march, and with the aid of the Shawnee chief, saved the life of the child for a time. The Indians turned west and descended the hill toward Tug River. They sought a small stream and waded down it until it became too deep for that purpose, when they changed to another. Mrs. Wiley kept well up for a few miles, then began to fail. Despite her utmost exertions she could not march at the rate the Indians were then doing. She fell behind the Indians marching in front of her, and began to feel that her child was in great danger. She suspected that her friends were near, although the Indians had told her nothing. At length the Cherokee chief stopped. He was leading the march, and he and most of the party were far in advance. Mrs. Wiley knew what he would do when he came back to her place in the line. His arrival there meant death for her child and possibly herself. The Shawnee chief was following her in the water. Mrs. Wiley ran out of the stream and with her last strength ran back up its course with her child. She had no particular object in doing this except to carry her child out of danger, and that was a vain effort. The old Shawnee was surprised, but he ran after her and caught her just as the Cherokee chief came up. She was surrounded by the Indians. The Cherokee chief seized her child by the feet and dashed out its brains against a big beech tree. He scalped it, and she was pushed back into the stream and forced to continue her flight.

It was almost dark when the party reached the Tug River, which they found much swollen from the recent rains. As the Indians arrived on its banks a violent thunder storm broke over the valley. The Indians realized that in crossing the river lay their hope of escape from the party in pursuit. Their only means of crossing the stream was by swimming. With the river at the stage at which they found it, that was a dangerous undertaking. At all times a swift mountain stream, it was now a raging torrent covered with drift and all manner of river rubbish. Mrs. Wiley was amazed and terrified when told she must

cross the stream by swimming in company with the Indians. In the gathering gloom its contortions were visible only by the fierce flashes of lightning that burned in the heavens. It seemed impossible for any one to survive a conflict with the raging river. But, she was seized by two Shawnee's and dragged screaming into the surging flood. One swam on either side of her. They grasped her firmly by her arms and swam easily and swiftly. They went with the current of the stream and avoided the drift with the dexterity of others. The position was almost upright with much of the body above the water; and they pushed, but slightly, against the current and were all the time working themselves toward the opposite shore. After being carried down the river what seemed to Mrs. Wiley several miles, they were all cast to the west bank and found themselves in "dead" water in the mouth of a small creek. There it was much more difficult to swim and support the captive above the water. But they succeeded in effecting a landing. The whole party was exhausted and some time was spent in resting, after which the journey was continued. The Indians waded up the stream into the mouth of which they had been cast by the river. It led up into a very rough mountain covered with bristling thickets of laurel and ivy. The storm cleared and the air became chilly as they descended the mountain range they were crossing. A large rock house was sought at the base of the range and a small fire made in it and the blaze screened. The Indians left this camp at dawn, and in the afternoon reached the Lousia River. The Lousia River was found full to the brim. After resting until almost dark the Indians crossed it as they had crossed the Tug. They went into camp under a cliff behind a mountain and built a roaring fire about which they slept through the night. In the early light of the following morning they sent out two of their number to hunt. In a short time the hunters returned with part of a buffalo they had killed in a cane-brake. The day was spent eating and sleeping. The Indians believed they had made a complete escape from their pursuers and did not again give that subject any serious consideration. As the sun was nearing the tops of the hills in the western range the party set forward again. They followed a trail which led through the valleys and over rough hills, but they marched in a leisurely way. It was well for Mrs. Wiley that they made no forced marches for she was by this time worn out. The loitering

march brought the Indians to the Ohio River on the ninth day of Mrs. Wiley's captivity.

The Indians did not descend directly to the Ohio, but came down the hills to its mouth. They found an immense flood in the Ohio, which was unusual for that season of the year. This flood increased the difficulty of their retreat. Notwithstanding this fact, however, the Indians appeared much pleased to reach the Ohio. The younger members of the band exclaimed "O-hi-o — O-hi-o — O-hi-o" seemingly in great delight.

How to cross the Ohio was now the question for the Indians. They discussed the matter for some time without arriving at a satisfactory conclusion and finally returned to the hills to avoid the backwater, pushed far up the small streams, and kept down the Ohio. Much of the time they were not in sight of the Ohio. They reached the mouth of the Little Sandy River without finding any means to cross the Ohio again and held council to determine upon a course. They were assisted in a decision apparently by the return of two Indians whom they had sent back from the crossing of the Lousia River to spy upon the movement of the pursuing party. Their report was delivered out of the hearing of Mrs. Wiley, who was beginning to understand a few of the different Indian tongues. After several hours spent in talk the party divided. The Cherokee chief, the Cherokee warrior, two Wyandots, and two Delawares swam across the Little Sandy River and disappeared in the woods.

The remaining Indians, with Mrs. Wiley, took their way up the Little Sandy. They appeared to be in no hurry. They left the main stream at the mouth of the Dry Fork, which they followed to the head of its branches. They crossed the divide through the Cherokee Gap to the Cherokee Fork of Big Blaine Creek. As they were descending this creek Mrs. Wiley became seriously ill, but she concealed her condition from the Indians as long as possible, fearing she might be killed should they discover the truth. It soon became impossible for her to proceed, however, the Indians went into camp near the mouth of the creek. They placed Mrs. Wiley in a small rock house near the camp and left her alone. There a son was born to her. The birth was premature and she was near death for some time, but she finally recovered and the child lived. She attributed her recovery to a season of fine weather which came from the first of her illness.

The Indians brought her meat from the game they killed and from the first of her illness kept her a fire; but as soon as she could walk they left her to gather her own firewood. Knowing that it was impossible for her to escape the Indians paid little attention to her.

The Indians spent the winter in the camp at the mouth of Cherokee Creek and allowed Mrs. Wiley to live alone in the rock house with her child. She lost all account of time. She did not know the day of the week from the time they went into camp there until she made her escape. The Shawnee chief gave her child a name. The sojourn at the place was uneventful but for one instance. One day when the weather was becoming warmer, the Shawnee chief came to the rock house and said the child was "three moons," meaning that its age was then about three months. He informed her that he was making preparations to give it the first test a boy was expected to undergo. He made no explanation and soon left the rockhouse. He returned in a short time and commanded her to take the child and follow him. He led her to the creek where the other Indians were assembled. The chief tied the child to a large slab of dry bark and set it adrift in the swift water of a small shoal. The child began to cry as soon as it felt the cold water, and this action seemed to condemn it in the minds of the warriors. They brandished their tomahawks and Mrs. Wiley rushed into the water and rescued the infant, immediately returning to the rock house with it. The Indians followed her, and when they arrived at the rock house the Wyandot killed the child with his tomahawk and immediately proceeded to scalp it. She was permitted to bury the child in a corner of the rock house.

Soon after the murder of her child and while the streams were full from the melting snow, the Indians left their camp at the mouth of Cherokee Creek. Mrs. Wiley was not strong but was forced to keep up with the party. They followed a trail which led up Hood's Fork of Big Blaine Creek. Crossing through a gap at the head of one of its branches they came to the Laurel Fork, which they followed to that fine rolling country now known as Flat Gap, in Johnson County. From that point they followed a small stream to the main branch of Big Mudlick Creek, which they descended to the great buffalo lick from which the stream derived its name. They camped at the lick in hope of killing some game, but none came during their stay.



They broke camp one morning at dawn and went down the creek, arriving during the day at an old Indian town at the mouth of Little Mudlick Creek. The actions of the Indians there made Mrs. Wiley suppose that the end of their journey had been reached and that they would remain for sometime. This is a remarkable location and the Indians kept Mrs. Wiley there until the following October.

The Indians holding Mrs. Wiley in captivity arrived at the mouth of Little Mudlick Creek about the first of April, possibly as much as a week or ten days earlier than that. They took up their abode in a rock house in the face of the cliff on the east side of the plateau. This rock house was just below the falls of Little Mudlick Creek, but at a higher elevation in the cliff than is the bed of the creek. The ledge at the entrance of the rock house over hangs the creek which runs a hundred feet or more below it, and the entrance is sixty feet at least below the top of the cliff. It is reached by following a narrow ledge along the face of the cliff from a point opposite the upper falls. This rock house is of considerable extent. It afforded a safe retreat for the party and one almost inaccessible to enemies if properly defended by even a few persons. It afforded a cool and pleasant habitation in summer.

The Indians remained at the camp on some mysterious mission, as Mrs. Wiley judged. They were often visited by other bands, some of which contained as many as twenty Indians. Sometimes these visiting bands remained several days; at other times they departed in a few hours. Mrs. Wiley learned the Shawnee language, also something of other Indian tongues. She made many effort to hear what the visiting Indians said to her captors, but was never able to get any information of benefit to her. The Shawnee chief told Mrs. Wiley he would take her to the Indian town beyond the Ohio when Indian summer came on, at which time he expected a large force of Indians to arrive and relieve him. Mrs. Wiley sought an opportunity to escape after this conversation with the old Shawnee, but none presented itself that she could believe promised success. She was entirely ignorant of the general physical features of the country in which she was being held, although she believed that she was nearer the Virginia settlements than when she was on the Ohio River. She had feigned sleep in the hope that her captors would say something about

the settlements of white people that she might hear, but they never did so. There had been times when she was out of sight of her captors and might have escaped, but never having been able to bring herself to believe the effort would prove successful, she had waited for a more favorable opportunity. As the time approached when she was to be taken to the Indian town she became more determined upon escape, or upon death in the effort. Her resolution in this matter was overturned by an event wholly unexpected.

One day about the end of October the Indians were aroused from their indolent loungings by the quavering war-whoop cried by some party about the mouth of Big Mudlick Creek. The Shawnee chief answered the war cry, and it was repeated. The Shawnee chief informed his party that the Cherokee chief had been on the warpath, and lost some of his warriors, and was now coming into camp with a captive white man. War-whoops were exchanged, and guns were fired by both parties. The Shawnee chief led his party to the plateau to receive the Cherokee chief and his warriors, who soon arrived. The Cherokee chief was followed by a mongrel band of some twenty Indians, and he brought with him a white man as prisoner. Mrs. Wiley supposed this prisoner to be about twenty years old, though she was not permitted to come near enough to have any conversation with him. This captive was terribly beaten when he arrived on the plateau.

Mrs. Wiley was sent back to the rock house when the Cherokee chief had talked with the Shawnee chief. The Cherokee gave her a kettle and told her to cook him some meat as soon as she could. She built up a fire in the rock house and slung the kettle, which she filled with bear meat and venison. She could hear the mad howling, whooping, and screeching of the warriors on the height about her, also the discharge of guns and the thumping and stamping of feet in an Indian dance. Shortly after dark the whole band came down from the plateau, and the captive was not with them. It did not take her long to gather from the conversation of the Indians that the prisoner had been tortured at the stake. The Cherokee chief was in a great rage, sullen and savage. He did not remain long in the camp, but returned to the heights above with his hands full of meat from the kettle. Mrs. Wiley was rudely treated by the Indians recently arrived, and the Shawnee chief

and his followers were excited and blood-thirsty. The camp was overflowing with whooping Indians threatening to kill her, and for the first time the Shawnee chief did not stand her friend. She appealed to him but he did nothing to quiet the howling mob, and he left the camp and went to join the Cherokee. Finally, the Indians left the camp and went above, yelling along the gorge above the falls. Mrs. Wiley was more at ease when she heard them whooping on the plateau, but what the night would bring forth she could not tell.

An hour or two after dark a band of Indians, all of the late arrivals, came down from the assembly. They tied Mrs. Wiley's hands with a strip of rawhide, by one end of which she was led to the height where the Indians were assembled about a big fire. The dancing ceased when she arrived. The Cherokee chief appeared as the commander of the Indians and told her that she was to be burned. She appealed to the Shawnee chief, but he made no definite answer. There was no sympathy for her in the mad band. She remembered the cruelties and many outrages she suffered at the hands of the Indians, and as no prospect to escape came to her, nor seemed likely to come in the future even should she lived, she was the more easily reconciled to death. In after years she affirmed that concern for her life and all earthly things departed from her, leaving her calm and collected. In this frame of mind she was bound to a tree, a small oak from which all the lower branches had been cut. Her demeanor seemed to please the Cherokee chief. Because of her courage or from some other cause which was never known to her, proceedings in the execution were suspended. The Indians retired for council and talked for a long time, as Mrs. Wiley believed. When they returned the Cherokee chief informed Mrs. Wiley that he had bought her from the Shawnee, and that he would take her to his town on the Little Tennessee where she could teach his wives (he spoke as though he had quite a few of them) to write and weave cloth like her dress. He unbound her and led her back to the camp in the rock house, followed by the Shawnee chief. There the fire was lighted anew. The Cherokee produced a buckskin bag from which he counted down to the Shawnee five hundred little silver broaches about as large as the silver dime of today, the price he had agreed to pay for Mrs. Wiley. They were received by the Shawnee as though he had a supreme contempt for money, and swept by him

from the buckskin upon which they had counted to him into a bag similar to that from which they had been taken. This bag he placed in his pack and lay down by the fire to sleep.

The Cherokee chief bound Mrs. Wiley with raw thongs cut from a buffalo hide, which he drew very tight, causing her great pain. He returned to the plateau and was gone a long time. He came back with several of his band sometime in the night and all slept in the rock house.

In the afternoon of the day after the attack upon Mrs. Wiley's house, Mathias Harman and the hunters returned to the settlement. The swollen streams and the heavy loads carried by their horses had delayed them twenty-four hours; but for these impediments they would have arrived in time to have prevented the murders committed by the Indians. The confidence of the hunters that they would arrive in the settlement before the Indians, had caused them to neglect to send a runner to warn the settlers of their danger.

Immediately upon his return Mathias Harman went to the house of Wiley where he found many of the settlers. He made a minute examination of the country around the house. In the hills north of the house he found evidence that the Indians had passed that way. He followed the discovery some miles, and upon his return to the cabin he assured the settlers that Mrs. Wiley was alive and a prisoner, that she was carrying her child which had been spared, and that the Indians would follow the Tug River war-trail and try to cross the Ohio to their towns. It was his opinion that the Cherokee chief was the leader of the band, the number of which he had determined from the trail. He was confident that he could overtake the Indians and recover the prisoners. His purpose to do this was determined upon at once.

Harman was a bold and active man. He believed this raid was made more by accident than design and that it indicated no uprising of the Indians nor any purpose to harrass the settlement. It was not regarded as of sufficient importance to delay the settlement to be made at the mouth of John's Creek. He assembled those interested in that enterprise and gave them instructions as to what they should carry with them, when to set out, what to do in case they should arrive before he could return from the



pursuit of the Indians, and the most favorable route for them to take on the journey. There were about twenty-four men in this colony, but the exact number is not known, and their names are lost to us. We know that among them were Mathias Harman, Absalom Lusk, Henry Skaggs, James Skaggs, his brother, Robert Hawes, Daniel Harman, Adam Harman, and Henry Harman. It is believed that a man named Horn, also one named Leek, were with the colonists. Harman selected ten of the most experienced Indian fighters to go with him in pursuit of the party having Mrs. Wiley and her child in captivity. Thomas Wiley was not a member of the colony and did not go out with them.

Mathias Harman and his company of hunters set out early in the day in pursuit of the Indians. So confident that he was right did Harman feel that he did not at first attempt to follow the trail made by the savages, but went directly to the head waters of Bluestone River and crossed the Great Flat Top Mountain. He found the trail of the Indians in the hills about the head of the Tug River; it followed the old Indian war-path as Harman had conjectured. The ancient way was so well defined that it required no effort to discover and follow it, which made their pursuit rapid and certain. Each camp of the Indians was discovered, and it was plain that the Indians were being gained upon every day.

If the Indians had not left the old war-path and turned down the small streams to Tug River they would have been overhauled by Harman and his party in a few hours. It was difficult traveling on horseback along the streams, for they were frequently choked with thickets. This caused delay when rapid movement was so necessary. Harman saw that the Indians were not far in advance and were aware of the presence of the party in pursuit.

Just before night they found the body of Mrs. Wiley's child, which they buried in a shallow grave hastily dug with tomahawks and scalping knives. A few minutes after the Indians had plunged into the water and crossed Tug River. Harman and his men stood upon the spot they had left. It was impossible to get the horses across the river in its flooded condition on such a night. The party camped on the bank of the river and spent the night in building rafts upon which to carry over the baggage in the morning.

Harman effected a safe crossing early the following day. It was past noon when he again found the Indian trail, which wound through a country so rough and hilly that it was well nigh impossible to follow it with horses. When he arrived at the point where the Indians had crossed the Lousia River it was the unanimous opinion of all the hunters that it was useless to follow the trail further. They all believed that it would be impossible to come up with the Indians. Mrs. Wiley was relieved of the burden of her child, and the Indians being appraised of the pursuit, they would hold their course to the rough, bush grown, stony ridges where horses could scarcely go. So, with regret, the pursuit was abandoned at the Lousia River.

From the point where the Indian Trail was abandoned Harman and his company ascended the Lousia River to the mouth of John's Creek and went into camp in the old hunting lodge built there by Harman more than thirty years before.

The colonists, expected directly from Virginia, did not arrive for some days after the coming of Harman and his company. Their horses were heavily packed, and their progress through forests and over streams was necessarily slow. High water hindered much.

The site selected for the fort was almost a half mile below the mouth of John's Creek and about one hundred yards back from the east bank of the Lousia River. The fort was built on the plan common to the forts in frontier settlements. It was about twenty feet square and two stories in height. The upper story projected beyond the walls of the lower story about two feet on every side, and the extra space was floored with heavy timbers in which loop holes were cut through which to fire down upon besieging Indians should they ever come to such close quarters. The walls of both stories were provided with openings through which to fire upon their foe. The door or gate was made of split oak timbers six inches in thickness. It was hung upon strong wooden hinges made by the hunters, opened inward, and was made secure by an immense beam of oak. The roof sloped up from each side of the fort to the point in the center, and was made of thick slabs of white oak timber "pinned" to the log "ribs" or rafters with long wooden pins or pegs driven into holes bored with an auger. A small stream flowed from the hills back of the bottom and passed close by the fort, upon

which the settlers relied for water. The timber about the fort was cut off close to the ground and burned back the full space of the rifle range. This was done to deprive the Indians of cover should they ever besiege the fort.

This crude and strong building thus erected by the rough back-woodsmen of the Virginia frontier, all of whom were as brave and hardy as any who ever founded a frontier post, was the famous blockhouse. The settlement commenced by its erection was called Harman Station.

After passing through the horrors of such an ordeal as that to which she had been subjected, Mrs. Wiley found it impossible to sleep. She had nerved herself to face death with resignation, and her nerves were unstrung with the relaxation following her unexpected deliverance from the stake. And she was troubled by the change of masters. She feared the Cherokee. He was in every way different from the Shawnee chief. He was quick and energetic of action, cruel, savage and treacherous by nature, always restless and anxious to be moving. While she believed that she owed her life to his interference in her behalf, she was not sure the future would prove that she would have much to be thankful for in that matter. Her chance of escape seemed cut off and that troubled her; she regretted that she had not made the effort to escape months before. While pondering on these things she fell into a broken and troubled sleep. She found this sleep most strange, for she seemed more awake than ever. She was never sure she was asleep at all, but she always insisted that she saw this vision or had this remarkable dream: The young man so lately tortured by the Indians came to her, bearing in his hand a lamp made from the bleached skull of a sheep, the brain cavity of which was filled with buffalo tallow in which was a wick burning brightly. The man did not speak, but by signs indicated that she must follow him. Then her bonds fell off. The young man threaded the deep defiles of the forest with the flame of his lamp fluttering in the wind. He did not look back to see if she was following him. Arriving at the steep mountain of great height he rapidly ascended it. When he reached the top he blew strongly upon his lamp flame which immediately leaped to a height sufficient to reveal the whole country below. She looked where he pointed across the river. There stood a fort erected by white men. As she was anxiously appealing to him for information as to

who dwelt there the light paled, flickered a moment, then was gone. She was left alone in the darkness, and was immediately roused from her slumber. This dream or manifestation or phenomena, by whatever name, was repeated twice, and last time being just as the Indians began to stir in the camp.

Mrs. Wiley was unbound by the Cherokee, and informed by him that it was his purpose to set out on the journey to his town in a day or two, but that he was going that morning to the great buffalo lick on Big Mudlick Creek to kill game. It was not long until the whole band of Indians left camp in the rockhouse. She soon fell into a deep sleep from which she was awakened by the roaring of a heavy storm of wind and rain. The instant that she awoke the peculiar dream came to her mind with great force. It seemed to be a call to her to make an effort to escape; at least, so she regarded it, and she decided to act upon it. She saw the wind was blowing the rain into one corner of the rock house. She rolled herself over and over until she lay in the rain blown in by the wind. It was but a short time until the rawhide thongs with which she was bound were soaked and became slippery and easily removed. When free she bound her dog to large stone to prevent his following her, seized a tomahawk and a scalping knife and descended quickly to the bed of Little Mudlick Creek. She waded that stream to its junction with the larger stream, which she waded to Big Paint Creek. There she remembered that she had no well-defined plan of action, but after a little time spent in reflection she remembered that she had seen a river in her dream and concluded that she might reach this river by wading continuously down stream. She acted upon that conclusion. She found it difficult to wade in Big Paint Creek. It is a deep, swift stream and the heavy rain quickly raised the small streams flowing into it and they carried in muddy water which soon made it impossible for her to determine the depth. She was often carried off her footing and more than once was in danger of drowning.

Big Paint Creek makes a big bend which she was compelled to follow around and it was growing dusk when she was at the mouth of Rock House Branch. At the mouth of Jennie's Creek she crossed Paint Creek. She waded up Jennie Creek, which the heavy rain had put out of its banks. Wind and rain continued all night. When she reached the



forks of Jennie's Creek she was almost exhausted and for a long time she was much puzzled as to which branch of the stream she should follow. Her choice of branches was right; she turned to her left and followed the Lick Fork. In half a mile she was again compelled to choose between two branches of the stream, for there the Middle Fork falls into the Lick Fork. She again turned to her left and once again her choice was correct. She followed the Lick Fork to the mouth of a small branch coming in from the east. Here she left the larger stream and followed the little one to its head where she crossed through a gap to the stream now known as Bear Branch, which she descended to its junction with Little Paint Creek. Continuing down the latter stream she stood upon the bank of the Louisa River as the dull dawn of a cloudy morning appeared in the east. It is unnecessary to dwell here upon the exhausted condition of Mrs. Wiley. She had waded against swift currents of overflowed streams for more than twelve hours and had been wading for as much as eighteen hours. She dragged herself up the bank of the river and soon came opposite the blockhouse. She saw women and children there but no man was in sight. She called out to make her presence known and for assistance to cross the river. So unexpected, it alarmed the people at the fort and they went in hurriedly and closed the gate.

Mrs. Wiley was impatient and anxious, fully expecting to be followed by the Indians. Seeing the blockhouse, she reasoned that the Indians knew of its existence and would seek her in that direction. She was fearful that they might appear any minute. She continued to call to the people in the fort, calling out her name and saying that she had escaped from the Indians, whom she expected to follow her. After what appeared to her to be a long time, an old man came out of the fort. She recognized him at once as Henry Skaggs, an old-time friend of her father. It did not require much time for her to convince him that she was Jennie Wiley, and that she stood in great danger of being recaptured by the Indians. Skaggs knew the Cherokee chief well. He saw that no time was to be lost in getting her across the river. He told Mrs. Wiley that the men of the fort, except himself, had gone away early in the morning with the canoes. He said that they would not return for sometime, and that he would be compelled to construct a raft upon which to bring her over. He advised her to attempt to swim across should the Indians ap-

pear, as it was his opinion that she would suffer death if recaptured.

A dead mulberry tree stood on the bank of the river and Skaggs and the women went vigorously to work to fell it. It was tall and had few branches. When it fell it very fortunately broke into three pieces of about equal length. The logs were hastily rolled into the river and bound together with long grapevines pulled down from the forest trees where they grew wild. Placing two rifles upon the raft, Skaggs pushed out into the river which was full to overflow and which was carrying much drift. After being carried far down the stream, Skaggs made a landing. Mrs. Wiley stepped upon the crude craft and it was again pushed into the stream. When in mid-stream, the raft was caught by the drift and nearly pulled apart, but by hard work both raft and drift were brought to some overhanging trees standing on the east bank. The branches of these trees were seized and the raft brought to shore about one-half mile below the blockhouse.

When Mrs. Wiley and Skaggs had gone up the river to the fort and were about to enter the gate, Indians began yelling from the thickets near the Louisa. A moment later a large band of Indians came into view, among them the Cherokee chief; with them was Mrs. Wiley's dog. The Cherokee chief saw Mrs. Wiley at the entrance to the fort. He called out to her to know why she had left him after he had saved her life and paid his silver for her. He insisted that she had not treated him as she should have done, and closed his appeal with the words: "Honor, Jennie, honor." She did not reply to him. Skaggs fired his rifle in the direction of the savages though the distance was too great for the range of the small rifle. At the sound of the rifle, the Cherokees turned about and with a defiant gesture uttered a fearful whoop in which he was joined by his warriors. Seeing that Mrs. Wiley had escaped and that he could not recapture her, the Cherokee chief disappeared in the woods, followed by his savage companions and Mrs. Wiley's dog.

Mrs. Wiley found friends in the blockhouse; most of the settlers were well known to her in Virginia. She was anxious to return to her husband and relatives. When the winter was well begun, a party commanded by Mathias Harman took her to her Virginia settlement on Walker's

Creek and restored her to her husband and relatives. On the way the party was attacked several times but succeeded in beating off the savages. It was unusual to find Indians in the woods in the winter and from the circumstances it was feared that they would prove exceedingly troublesome to the settlers at the blockhouse the next summer.

Mrs. Wiley was in captivity about eleven months. After her return, she and her husband resided on Walker's Creek, Bland County and Clear Fork about twelve years. Then they moved to Kentucky and settled on the Big Sandy River just about the mouth of Tom's Creek in what is now Johnson County and some fifteen miles from the blockhouse and ten or twelve miles from the old Indian town at the mouth of Little Mudlick Creek.

The Indians attacked the blockhouse several times during the summer of 1788. The settlers surrounded it with a stockade. The Indians maintained something of a siege which lasted for about three weeks. This was in September. Due to their presence, no crops could be raised during the summer. Several of them were killed by the settlers. Some of the settlers became discouraged and as soon as cold weather approached they returned to their Virginia settlement. Thus weakened it was not believed that the fort could be defended another year. The settlers all returned to Virginia in 1788-89. The Indians immediately destroyed the blockhouse. Together with some cabins, the complete settlement was destroyed.

In the winter of 1789-90 some of the settlers returned to the blockhouse site; they were accompanied by other settlers, a majority of whom were from Lee and Scott Counties, Virginia. They erected a second blockhouse where the original stood, but it was not as substantially built as the original. In the summer of 1791, many new settlers came. The settlers were troubled for many years by the Indians, but the settlement was never completely broken up. It is believed that Mathias Harman did not again settle permanently in the Blockhouse Bottom, though he was there for some years. He died in Tazewell County, Virginia.

## THE MASSACRE OF THE SLUSS FAMILY

Since there are so many conflicting stories as to the details of the massacre of the Sluss family by the Indians, it is our effort to "piece together" the best we can the facts and details that have been handed down to us by tradition.





It was common knowledge among the settlers of this section of Southwest Virginia that the Cherokees and Shawnees had been on the war path for some time and were committing depredations along the Ohio and Kanawha Rivers and that scattered bands were making their way up New River and across the Alleghany Mountains toward the fertile valley where game was to be found in abundance, massacring all with whom they came into contact.

Warnings of the close proximity of the marauding savages had repeatedly sent the pioneers scurrying with their families to the protection of the Block House which was surrounded by dugouts and rifle pits, only to learn after days of imprisonment that the rumors were without foundation.

Late in July 1779, it was reported that Elinipsico, son of the famous Shawnee Chieftain Cornstalk, with a party of 50 or 60 warriors, were infesting the neighborhood and that a family in Giles County by the name of Lynbrook had been massacred by them. Jared Sluss, the pioneer, believed this to be another wild rumor and decided to remain at home while keeping vigilant watch for any indication of the presence of the Indians in this vicinity. Jared Sluss never permitted himself to get beyond sight of his house for something in fear of an attack by the Indians. Later, thinking the possibility of an attack had vanished, he and his eldest son, James, a lad of about twelve, proceeded to work in a field just over the brow of a hill and out of sight of his home. Two of his daughters were away from home at the time while three of his other children, ages 7, 10 and 4 were playing in the bright sunshine of a perfect spring morning. They had been cautioned to go no further away from home than the "spring" which was a short distance from the house and to keep a sharp lookout for the Indians. Christina, mother of the children and wife of Jared Sluss, after rocking her six months old daughter, Mary, to sleep, had placed the little girl tenderly in the cradle and placed it under a high bed in the corner of one of the rooms to keep the flies from annoying her while she peacefully slept and knowing not that what she had done would save the child from a horrible death. Unaware that the savages were hiding in the brush a short distance away, the children continued their joyful play while their mother was busy with the house chores. Suddenly she heard a loud scream from one of the children and which was followed by terrifying screams of the

other children. Looking through a partly-opened door, she beheld a sight of horror. A party of Indians had worked themselves between the children and the house and before anyone was aware of their presence they had blocked the passageway leading to the house, and the only means of escape was in the direction of their father and brother who were working just over the hill from the house. As they ran frantically to their father, a rail fence some fifty yards from the house obstructed their escape and Laura, aged 4, was immediately overtaken by the Indians. Hazel, aged 10, was able to climb over the fence only to look back to see Laura's brains dashed out with a war club. Hazel ran back to her little brother, Marion, aged 7, and lifted him across the fence and at the same time shielded him with her body as a protection from the Indians. For this heroic act, she too paid with her own life. The twang of a powerful bow string, drawn its full length of strength by a savage, sped through the air and pierced her frail body through and through while the impact caused its shaft to quiver for seconds in her lifeless body after she had fallen dead.

The sudden appearance of the father and James at the brow of the hill was too late to save the life of the little heroine but did have the effect of halting the attack of the Indians long enough to permit the escape of the little boy, Marion. Meeting his father and brother, he was told to rush to the fort for help. Arriving at the fort bruised and bleeding, the little fellow, through his tears, told of the attack and the men immediately hurried to the rescue. When they soon arrived, the scene they beheld was long to be remembered. James, though a lad of tender age, had fought and died valiantly by his father's side. The ground about them and the scattered pools of blood was evidence of a fierce battle in defense of their loved ones. Jared Sluss and his son, James, had been scalped. The body of the little girl lay just over the fence, her scalp missing and the arrow still in her body. The mother was found just outside the kitchen door, her body hacked to pieces, scalped, her arm broken and bearing other evidence of a fierce struggle; however, she was still alive. She afterward regained consciousness and was able to relate some of the terrible details of the tragedy but died in three days.

While the victims were being buried, the people gathered around to pay their last respects and all the while

could hear the war whoops, howls and jeers of the Indians who appeared at times on a ridge in full view and dancing in glee as if to challenge the settlers to pursue them in revenge.

Mary, the little six-months-old baby, was later found in the cradle under the high bed where loving hands had tenderly placed her. Somewhat fretful at having been awakened and not old enough to comprehend the terrible tragedy, Mary lived and attained the ripe age of 104.

The location of the Sluss family and where the tragedy occurred can now be found on a farm known as the "Old Crabtree Place" near Ceres. The graves of the victims are in an old cemetery near Ceres. The fort itself and where the Sluss family so often sought refuge and protection from the Indians was torn down some 70 years ago.

No historical marker was ever erected in honor of the noble Sluss family and perhaps the last massacre by the Indians in this area. The scene of the tragedy is marked and identified each spring by a field of pure white-scented daffodils which were planted by the tender and loving hands of Mrs. Christina Sluss. Although the field where the daffodils grow has been cultivated many, many times, the appearance of the daffodils each spring represent a living memorial to a noble pioneer family and whose struggles, death and noble deeds made our rich heritage possible. May they never cease to bloom.

### JOHN GOOLMAN DAVIDSON

(Excerpts from Johnston's History  
of the Middle New River Settlements)

John Goolman Davidson, an Irishman, was born in Dublin, Ireland. He was a cooper by trade and from which he was generally called and known as "Cooper Davidson."



He, with his family, came from Rockbridge County and was accompanied by Richard Bailey and his family from what is now Franklin County, Virginia, and settled at Beaver Pond Spring, what is now Mercer County. A fort was built which was called and known as the "Davidson-Bailey Fort," and which parts of said fort may still be seen. Both Davidson and Bailey had large families; the latter had eight sons and two daughters. These men, as well as their sons and daughters, were brave and courageous and maintained their position on the border at the settlement they had made from the day they came in 1780 until the close of the Indian Wars in 1795. At the time of the settlement of the Baileys and Davidsons at Beaver Pond Spring, their nearest neighbors were Captain James Moore in Abb's Valley, some twelve miles away; Mitchell Clay on Clover Bottom, about the same distance, and a man by the name of Compton on Clear Fork of Wolf Creek, about eight miles away.





Mr. Davidson, having some unfinished business in Rockbridge County and the collection of some eight hundred dollars due him, determined to return to the valley and make final settlement of his business and especially to collect the money owed him. In February, 1793, Mr. Davidson set out on horseback. He reached Rockbridge safely, collected his money and started on his way homeward, having with him an extra horse which he was leading. The route that Mr. Davidson followed from the Valley of Virginia was by way of New River to Walker's Creek, to the mouth of its main north branch, Kimberling, and thence up the same to its course, and through a gap, and down to a stream (Wolf Creek), to and through another gap (South Gap) and by way of what is now Rocky Gap, Bland County.

Richard Bailey, who already has been spoken of, had given his son, Henry, a small calf. In the early spring, when the buds and sprouts began to appear, the calf and other cattle had been turned out in the range to make their living off the young twigs and leaves that had begun to shoot forth. The calf, failing to come home with the other cattle on the evening of the eighth day of March, 1793, was feared to have gotten mired in some swampy land down the creek and it was necessary for Richard Bailey, the small boy, to get up early the next morning and go look for his calf. The boy rose early, called his bear dogs, and set off in search for the strayed calf. On his return home after failing to find the calf, and while passing through the swamp bottom land, his dogs suddenly raised their bristles as if they were about to engage in battle with some wild animal. The boy, supposing it was a wolf, rushed forward to see the fight. Looking along the path, he saw some horses and men. Being so alarmed, he fled home to the fort and reported what he had seen. An older brother, Micajah, gathered his rifle and followed the party of men far enough to discover that it was a body of Indians. He, too, immediately returned to the fort and spread the alarm. Major Robert Crockett, then on the head of Clinch River, gathered a party of men and followed the Indians until he came upon their camp late one evening. After carefully observing their position, he decided to have the men lay on their arms that night and make the attack at the break of day the next morning. He had observed that the Indians had

turned their horses out to graze on an island where the Indians were camping.

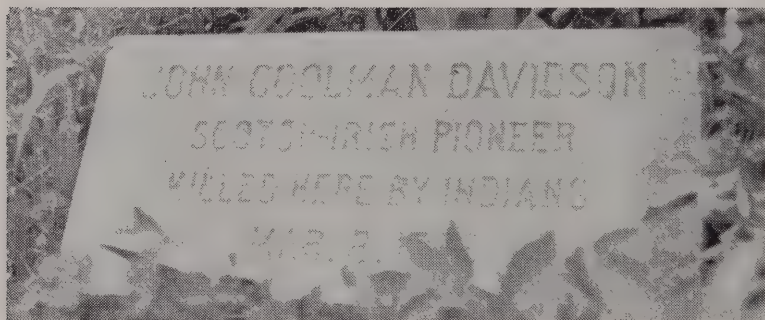
It has been reported that on the morning of March 15, Major Crockett had his men up and ready for the attack by the time it was light enough to see an object. He told his men that the Indians would stir early and that while some were preparing breakfast, one or more would come out to round up the horses and drive them into camp. He instructed his men to wait for the horse drivers to start the animals toward the camp and they would quietly follow them into camp and make the attack. Crockett had with him a man by the name of Gid Wright, who, when the advance began, was thrown close to one of the Indians who was engaged in driving the horses. Wright, being very nervous and overcome with what we would call "buck fever," and without obeying his orders, fired at the Indian but missed him. The sound of the shot alarmed the Indians to the extent that they fled in fright. John Bailey, who was active and quick on foot, ran close enough to one of the Indians to kill one of them, but the rest succeeded in making their escape. The Indians, in making their escape, left their breakfast cooking on the camp fire and all their horses. One of the horses was recognized as belonging to Mr. Davidson, the one he had ridden from home and on which was his saddle with one brass stirrup missing. It was immediately determined that Mr. Davidson had been killed by the Indians and his horse taken. After gathering up the other horses, they started home in search of Mr. Davidson's body. Samuel Lusk was with Major Crockett's party and assisted in the search for Mr. Davidson's body. As soon as the party reached their settlement, they sent out men along the path leading through Bailey's Gap in East River Mountain and on to the Laurel Fork of Clear Fork of Wolf Creek in Bland County. Mr. Davidson's hat band was soon found on the path of the mountain. On inquiry, it was found that Mr. Davidson had passed the settlement south of Rocky Gap before noon on the eighth day of March and it was also found where he had fed his horses at the mouth of Clear Fork. Further investigation disclosed the blade of a hatchet having been stuck into a white oak tree, and that a gun had rested on the hatchet. Nearby, on the bark of a beech tree was freshly carved the name of "Rice" and under the root of the tree on the side of the creek where the water had washed away the earth, the nude body of Mr. Davidson was found. The body was

so badly decomposed that it was impossible to remove it to his home, and was buried near where it was found and where it still remains.

The searching party for Mr. Davidson's body found evidence on the ground that satisfied them that Mr. Davidson had been shot from his horse where the hatchet was found, and that his horse, through fright, ran into the brush and vines on the creek bottom by which one of the stirrups had been pulled off. It was thought that Rice and his party got the \$800 which Mr. Davidson had with him when killed.

Several years after the killing of Mr. Davidson, Mr. William Stowers, then fifteen years old, while plowing in the bottom where Mr. Davidson was killed, found a brass stirrup which was recognized by the family of Mr. Davidson as the one belonging to his saddle.

Captain William Stowers, of Bland County, Virginia, at the age of eighty, related that he well remembered Mrs. Virginia Wiley, who a number of years after her captivity, visited his father's house on Clear Fork of Wolf Creek, and that her mind was weak. In fact, she had had but little mind since her return from captivity, and that he heard her relate to his father and family the story of her capture, the killing of her children, her journey to the Indian town and her escape; and among other things, her conversation with the Indians on the Harmon battlefield on the Tug. A letter from Armstrong Wiley to Mr. Johnston states that both Mrs. Wiley and her husband, Thomas Wiley, are buried in the Wiley burying ground at Wiley's Falls in Giles County.



## CHAPTER II

### EARLY EXPLORATIONS

#### WALKER'S CREEK AND WALKER'S MOUNTAIN NAMED FOR FAMOUS EXPLORER, DR. THOMAS WALKER

*Dr. Thomas Walker, son of Thomas Walker, of King and Queen County, was born January 25, 1715. He was educated at the College of William and Mary, studied medicine, was a merchant, surveyor, explorer, member of the House of Burgesses for Louisa 1752-1754, Commissary for General Braddock, Burgess for Albemarle, 1761-1772, and Indian Commissioner at Fort Stanwix.*

About the year 1748, Dr. Thomas Walker, Colonel James Patton and others organized and incorporated what was known as the "Loyal Company" and secured from the English Crown a grant for 800,000 acres of land to be located north of the North Carolina line and west of the Alleghany Mountains. Dr. Walker was made agent for this company and both he and his company played a conspicuous part in the early settlement and development of the present Bland County and that portion of Southwest Virginia west of New River. The first land ever surveyed in Tazewell County, so far as existing records show, was under the 800,000 acre grant to the Loyal Company.

On March 6, 1750, Dr. Walker organized an exploring party at his home in Albemarle County to further explore the Virginia territory west of New River. This was done, apparently, for the purpose of discovering choice lands to be located for the Loyal Company and to select desirable sites for settlements. Dr. Walker kept a record of the route followed by him and daily performances of the expedition. It seems that the Doctor and his companions thought rum a necessity and he as a physician mentioned it as the first of the necessities.

After crossing Blue Ridge, the party entered the Roanoke Valley at or near Bonsacks and from there to the present Roanoke River. Here, they bought corn for their horses from Michael Campbell and proceeded up the river to a point above Salem. Thence they followed the stream to "William Englishe's." This was William Ingles who had then settled at Draper's Meadows and whose family and descendants in a few years became tragically associated



with the history of Southwest Virginia. It was evidenced by Dr. Walker that the Upper Roanoke Valley was then attracting many Scotch-Irish settlers from Pennsylvania and the Shenandoah Valley.

As Dr. Walker and his companions proceeded on their journey, they found settlers all along the Upper Roanoke Valley, at Draper's Meadows, and the Dunkard Colony at Dunkard's Bottom on the west side of New River. Proceeding on to Reed Creek, near Max Meadows, Wythe County, they lodged with James McCall and bought from him a supply of bacon. In the middle Holston Valley, at a point somewhere between Seven Mile Ford and Marion, they found Samuel Stalnaker preparing for a permanent settlement and the Walker party gave a day to helping the pioneer "raise" his house. Stalnaker, it seems, was then the most advanced settler west of New River and when Walker and his companions separated from him, Walker wrote in his journal: "We left the inhabitants."

On the 13th of April, five weeks after leaving his home in Albemarle County, Dr. Walker, with his company, arrived at Cumberland Gap and his journal called it "Cave Gap." It was on this occasion that Dr. Walker gave the name "Cumberland" to the gap, the mountain and the river that now bears his name.

Sometime in May, not definitely stated in his journal, Dr. Walker and his party changed their course to the east and crossed the Cumberland Mountain into the present territory of Virginia, leaving what is now Kentucky. It is not known at what point they entered the state of Virginia. The most reasonable conclusion is, that on the journey from the Cumberland region, they passed through the present counties of Wise, Dickenson, Buchanan and Tazewell and the counties of Mercer and Summers in the present West Virginia.

Major Jed Hotchkiss, who was a distinguished engineer and mineralogist and well known throughout Virginia before and after the Civil War, confidently asserted that Dr. Walker was at the present site of Pocahontas, Tazewell County, Virginia in 1750 and that he was the first man to discover and make mention of the great coal deposits about Pocahontas and the Flat Top coal region.

Leaving the New River, Dr. Walker and his companions traveled up the Greenbrier and its tributaries and

crossed the Alleghany Mountains to the headwaters of James River. They visited the Hot Springs and then passed on down to Rockbridge County. From there they went to Augusta Court House at Staunton, arriving at that place on July 11, 1750. The following day, Dr. Walker separated from his company and started to his home in Albemarle County where he arrived at noon on July 13, 1750. Thus was completed one of the most eventful exploring expeditions ever made to Southwest Virginia. Dr. Walker had occupied four months and one week from the beginning to the completion of his journey and his journal discloses very little of the real purpose of the expedition. It appears that he was hunting for valuable minerals more eagerly than for suitable places for settlements. He must have had no conception of the unmeasured wealth in the shape of "black diamonds" that was hidden beneath the surface of the earth lying between the Cumberland Mountains and the New River.

Although Dr. Walker saw, no doubt, Walker's Mountain, it is not known if he named the mountain and the stream in his honor. It cannot be concluded, therefore, that Dr. Walker and his company entered any portion of the present Bland County. However, due to the explorations by Dr. Walker, the settlement of Bland and Southwest Virginia was made possible.

### CHRISTOPHER GIST

In October 1750, Christopher Gist, under the auspices of the Ohio Land Company, set out on his exploring expedition from his home on the Potomac River. He was as energetic in the prosecution of the work of his Company as Dr. Walker had proved to be in his performance on his exploring expedition. Christopher Gist, following the instructions of his Company, crossed the Alleghany Mountain and passed through what is now West Virginia to the Ohio River and explored the country along that stream as far down as Great Falls, where the city of Louisville is now located. He devoted the entire winter to exploring Kentucky. In the spring of 1751, he reached Cumberland Mountain at Pound Gap and came through the gap to the southeast side of the Cumberland range, entering the present Wise County, Virginia. From that region he made his way northeastward, following nearly the same route that Dr. Walker had followed the preceding summer. His

course was along what is named on the maps the "Dividing Ridge" which divides the watersheds of the Clinch and Sandy valleys. It is possible that he too was making notes of the coal and other minerals and that he too was at Pocahontas, Tazewell County. He passed through Mercer and Summers Counties, West Virginia, and on Tuesday, May 7, 1751 crossed New River at a point near what is known as Crump's Bottom, one of the finest boundaries of land in the Middle New River section.

On Saturday, May 11, he came to a very high mountain upon the top of which was a lake or pond about three-fourths of a mile long northeast and southwest, and one-fourth of a mile wide. The water was fresh and clean with its borders a clean gravelly shore about thirty feet wide and a fine meadow with six springs in it. From this description, it is evident that Christopher Gist visited Salt Lake Mountain in Giles County as early as 1751 and found the lake that is called Mountain Lake. It is evident from this journal that the traditions that we so often hear repeated are nothing more than mythical and this lake existed as it now is at the time of the earliest explorations of the white men.

## JOSEPH HICKS

### Unsung Frontier Farmer (by I. R. Hicks)

Joseph Hicks, to which reference has been previously made, left no historical record, although he is mentioned in all the records of the Thomas Ingles massacre and the battle of Maxwell Meadows. It is not known from where he came, when he moved and resided in Burke's Garden, or when or where he became associated with the Negro man. We do know, however, that he and his Negro man were on their way to the home of Thomas Ingles when the attack was made on the Ingles by the Indians. As soon as Hicks discovered the Indians, he retreated south to Bland County to recruit vounteers and in which endeavor he was successful.

Joseph Hicks was married in 1790. His wife was one of the Irish immigrants who was brought over to the colonies by the crown and escaping the potato famine in Ireland. Joseph Hicks, like the balance of the colonist, was religious when the occasion presented itself for him to be.

The foundation of the Hicksville Methodist Church, under the pastorate of an itinerate circuit-rider preacher, was built during the first decade of the nineteenth century and named in honor of Joseph Hicks.

In the old cemetery, where rumor and tradition claim that the three oldest graves in Bland County are those of Joseph Hicks, his wife and the Negro boy of the Ingles-Maxwell incident. There are also old graves marked by uncut and unengraved stones. There are many smaller graves evidencing the high mortality rate among infants. In the early days graves were purposely unmarked and unidentified for protection against the Indians.

Family records show that two children were born to Joseph Hicks, Joseph T. Hicks, born March 20, 1798 and Rebecca Hicks, born April 9, 1800. No record has been found of Rebecca Hicks and it is presumed that she died during infancy. There is a stone or marker upon which the following inscription is now legible: "Mariah Hicks, born April 7, 1814, Died July 2, 1889, aged 75 years, 2 months and 25 days. Prepare to meet Thy God."

Joseph T. Hicks married at the age of 20 and was the father of 16 children of whom records are available. The first child was born on December 29, 1819. The cabin built by Joseph Hicks when he moved from Burkes Garden to Hicksville can be remembered by Mr. I. R. Hicks, who submitted this valuable information to the writer. The cabin built by Joseph T. Hicks at the time of his marriage in 1818 or 1819 is still standing.

Many of the early settlers of Virginia just "moved in", farmed the land, traded their claims without recording the transaction and lived off the land on what would be called now "a squatter's existence".

These men and women who cut trees out of the wilderness in order to have space for their crops, with the men alternately farming and hunting, the women farming, gardening and spinning, most often with a young baby and at all times a gun across their shoulders as protection against the Indians who occasionally came to ravage the single or small farms, created the basis for our present culture and society. We should be proud to be descended



from these mountain people who were people of God with feet of human clay.

## PHILLIP GOSE

An early settler in western Bland County was Phillip Gose, who came from Cripple Creek around 1795. He married Elizabeth Spangler, daughter of Peter Spangler, Jr., and Elizabeth Piper Huddle. Phillip Gose owned what is now the Kent Groseclose place and lived there until he moved to Burkes Garden around 1804. A son of Phillip Gose, Stephen, was born at what is now Ceres, Va., and was one of the first justices of Bland County. He lived on Hunting Camp Creek.

Phillip Gose moved from western Bland County in a wagon pulled by six horses and was assisted by neighbors, both in Bland and Burkes Garden. Since there was no road, the men cut trees and brush as they went straight up the ridge of Brushy Mountain and tied a tree to the wagon to act as a brake going down. The same procedure was used on Burkes Garden Mountain, except that on top of this mountain a keg of whiskey was opened and the occasion was well celebrated. This was the first wagon to enter Burkes Garden, which had been inaccessible except by bridle path.

Phillip Gose's wife, Elizabeth, having received her medical training from Dr. John Stanger of Cripple Creek, rode the mountains in this section in response to any call for help from those who were ill.

## THOMAS WITTEN

History of Tazewell County and Southwest Virginia  
by Pendleton — Page 237

Thomas Witten, who was, beyond dispute, the first white man to bring his family to Tazewell County and establish a permanent settlement, had been living on Walkers Creek, now Bland County, for a year or more prior to his settlement at the Crab Orchard on the Clinch.

He had boldly disregarded the claims of the Indians to the territory west of the New River and had defiantly ignored the Royal Proclamation of 1763 which forbade British subjects to settle in the disputed region. If his intended destination were Clinch Valley, why should he linger on Walker's Creek until 1771?

It is a very reasonable supposition that most of the first settlers came on tours of inspection and investigation before they moved their families. Thomas Witten had been living with his large family for a year or more within fifty miles of the place where he ultimately located and it is almost certain that he and his oldest sons made trips of exploration to the Clinch before they moved there.

### **SAMUEL SHANNON — THOMAS SHANNON**

**Johnston's History of the Middle New River  
Settlements — Page 46**

Poplar Hill, on Walkers Creek (now the County of Giles), was settled in the year 1774 by Samuel Shannon, who came from Amherst County, Virginia. After a few years residence at Poplar Hill, Mr. Shannon moved to the vicinity of Nashville, Tennessee, leaving behind him his son, Thomas, who is the ancestor of the Shannons of Giles and Bland County. Thomas Shannon became one of the most prominent citizens of his day in the vicinity in which he lived, both in civil and military affairs. He later became a captain in command of a company in the Revolutionary War and was very instrumental in the formation and early government of Bland County.

### **AUNT BETSY DAVIS, DAUGHTER OF JAMES BURKE, FIRST SETTLER**

Hiram Davis, of Peterstown, is in possession of a copy of the original obituary of "Aunt" Betsy Davis, written by J. H. Hoge in 1871, that no doubt will prove of interest in the history of Southwest Virginia. Although it is not known what became of James Burke, Aunt Betsy's father, after his departure from Burke's Garden in his escape from the Indians, it is an established fact that he left a number of descendants. The obituary follows:

"It becomes my sad duty to the numerous friends and relatives of "Aunt" Betsy Davis, that she is no more. She passed away from the sorrowing scenes of earth on Sabbath morning, the first day of January, 1871, aged 92 years, 10 months and 25 days.

"The deceased was the daughter of James Burke who was the first settler in Burkes Garden. Her father died when she was quite small and she was then taken and reared by her uncle, Mr. Pepper, who resided in Montgomery County. About the year 1808 she was married to Captain Hiram Davis of Giles County, now Bland County, and settled at a place on Walkers Creek where she lived until her death. She raised six children, three sons and three daughters. Addison Davis, one of her sons, was a representative from Bland County in the Legislature of Virginia. Aunt Betsy's husband died some thirty years before her death. She lost her sight shortly after her husband's death, which never returned again.

"The writer would say a word about the life and character of the deceased in all varied relations in life. She filled them with dignity and honor as a wife, mother and neighbor; none knew but loved and admired her. One peculiar feature of her character was her kindness to the poor and suffering of earth's children, always having a kind word and a cheerful smile for the distressed."

## JAMES BURKE

### Johnston's History of the Middle New River Settlements — Page 31

James Burke, who came with the Ingles, Drapers and Harmans to Draper's Meadows in 1749, moved with his family into Burkes Garden in 1754. It appears that in 1753, Burke, while on a hunting expedition, wounded an elk and followed it through what is now Henshue's Gap into that beautiful body of land which was later called Burkes Garden. The Indians had previously named this magnificent place "The Great Swamp".

Burke, upon his arrival at Burkes Garden along with his family, planted a crop, including potatoes, but in the fall of 1755 was driven out because of fear of the Indians. Burke had killed a large number of deer, elk and bear and

had tanned a number of hides which he took with him when he left in the fall of 1755. On his way out with his family, he camped one night in a hunter's camp near what is now Sharon Springs, Bland County. The Indians followed him and on their way killed two hunters in their camp. On approaching Burkes cabin and seeing several horses and the tanned hides rolled up in the cabin, they came to the conclusion that there were too many people for them to attack and contented themselves with cutting the throat of one of the horses. Burke never returned to the Garden to live, because, first, the Loyal Company claimed the land and had Ingles and Patton to survey it; Burke received not one foot of it and thence moved south where he died a natural death. Burke was reported to have been killed in the Garden but this information was later invalidated.



## LAND GRANTS AND SURVEYS

In March, 1747, John Buchanan, as a result of the Treaty of Lancaster by which the Six Nations of Indians renounced their claim to all lands in Virginia, made a group of surveys numbered 1 to 17, of which four were made on Walkers Creek, Bland County. The surveys consisted of 170, 260, 230, and 239 acres respectively. This was, perhaps, the first survey made in the present Bland County. The exact location of these tracts of land and surveys and the first settlers to establish permanent residence thereon are not definitely known, however, it is quite possible that this was on what is now called the upper part of Cracker's Neck.

[illegible]

**EARLY PIONEER TRAILS  
AND ROUTES TO AND THROUGH BLAND COUNTY**  
(History of Tazewell County and Southwest Virginia  
by Pendleton)

The route used by the pioneers as they journeyed from New River to and through Bland to the Clinch Valley and westward is well defined. It was the same trail as was made by herds of buffalo as they traveled to and from the regions east of the Alleghanies, and had, no doubt, been trodden many times by hunting and war parties of Indians. Coming from the east, the first settlers crossed New River at a ford opposite Ripplemead about one mile from where Walkers Creek empties into New River. A ferry was established just above the ford by the Snidows. The pioneer log dwelling of Colonel Christian Snidow, built in 1793, is still standing on the east side of the river opposite Ripplemead. From there they followed Walkers Creek Valley to where the Kimberling branch of that creek joins the main stream in the present Bland County. Then they followed Kimberling Creek to its source, crossed over the divide into what is now known as the Wilderness and through that forest to Rocky Gap. Passing through the Gap, they came up to the Clear Fork of Wolf Creek to the divide six miles east of the present town of Tazewell.

It required wonderful fortitude, perseverance and physical vigor for women and children to make the journey from the former homes of the emigrants. From New River to the points where they located was through an unbroken wilderness and so rugged that it was difficult to travel on foot or horseback. Most of the early settlers seemed to be pretty well supplied with horses, and it is likely that women and children rode on horseback and that the few necessary household articles were transported on horseback or pack-horses. The men and boys walked, carrying their rifles on their shoulders ready for instant use if an enemy, man or beast, appeared. It is possible that some of the settlers brought corn along with them and their families as they knew of the rich herbage in this area. The wild pea vine there grew abundantly in the forests and in places where the forest was free from brush and in the open places along the streams, the native blue grass grew in sufficient abundance to furnish good pasture for horses. Bickley, in writing of the hunters who

frequented this area before the advent of the pioneer settlers and who brought with them a number of pack-horses to take home their peltry, says: "Pasture for their horses was to be found everywhere; there was game of such abundance that plenty and good cheer were their companions from the time they left their homes till their return."

Owing to the very meager transportation facilities they possessed, each and every family had to exercise great care in selecting the amount and the character of the baggage they brought with them to their backwoods home. The supply of bedding and clothing was reduced to a minimum; barely sufficient bedding and clothing for protection from the cold was brought, these articles being of the plainest and most inexpensive kind. A modern housewife would be shocked and disgusted if she were called upon to begin housekeeping with the few and simple things the pioneer mothers brought with them in the way of house and kitchen furniture. These consisted of iron kettles, frying pans, pewter spoons and, maybe, a few pewter platters, and in a few cases a few steel knives and forks. Most of the tableware was made of wood, hand-made and home-made, such things as bowls, trenchers, platters and noggins. Crockery and chinaware did not make their appearance with the early settlers until some years after the pioneers had established their homes.

The man who was the head of the family had to assume and exercise a triune personality — that of a farmer, mechanic and a hunter. On occasion a fourth was added — that of a warrior. Every acre that he used had to be cleared of giant trees and thick undergrowth. This was done with an axe, wielded by his brawny arms, and the land was cultivated by him and his family with a hoe and other crude implements as he could improvise. In the role of mechanic he had to be a jack-of-all-trades, making wooden vessels for domestic use, rough bedsteads, tables, spoons, a loom, shoes and moccasins from buckskins and other wild animal hides — sometimes the raw hides. His list of tools was very limited — a drawing knife, broadaxe, tomahawk, a tool to rive clapboards to cover his cabin and cornercrib and stable, and possibly an auger and handsaw. With these tools he accomplished wonders as a carpenter. With awl, needle and waxed thread he or his wife made the moccasins for himself and family from buckskin he had dressed in the Indian style.

As a hunter the pioneer settler had great responsibility, for his wife and children were dependent upon his skill and success for their supply of meat, which was generally venison and bear's flesh. The grain would sometimes give out before the new crop was ready for harvest and the breast of pheasant and wild turkey were used as substitutes for bread. The pioneer virtually made conquest of this great country with the backwoodsman's axe and his trusty rifle. Men, boys, women and even girls could and did use effectively these indispensable weapons of the pioneer.

The pioneers brought with them a good supply of salt but they soon found that this mineral, so essential to the health and comfort of both man and beast, could be made at the Salt Lick on the North Fork of the Holston River. There was another article of food that the pioneers did not have to bring with them, and that was sugar which could be made at home from the magnificent groves of sugar maple. Every settler had his "sugar orchard" and in the late winter or early spring he would tap his sugar trees and make an abundant supply of sugar and "tree molasses" for his family needs for the ensuing year.

The first settlers usually came in groups or located in groups after they arrived and fixed their homes in such immediate nearness as would enable them to be of service to each other in times of need and stress. This established a community of interest as a means of protection against the attacks of hostile Indians. The home of a settler, centrally located, was selected in each neighborhood where all the families could flee for protection when the Indians made hostile incursions into the country. At these central points, forts were built where safety was assured to all who got there before the Indians made surprise attacks on their cabin homes. A fort consisted of a square palisade of upright logs, loop-holed with strong block houses as bastions at the corners. One side at least was generally formed by the back of the cabins themselves, all standing in a row with a great door or gate that could be strongly barred in case of need. Often no iron was employed in any of the buildings. The square inside contained the provision sheds and frequently a strong central block house as well. The forts, of course, could not stand the force of modern guns and ammunition. Other than the risk of burning, these forts were very effective from attacks by the Indians.



## DRESS OF THE EARLY SETTLERS

Women's dress and clothing is well described by Dr. Doddridge in the words, "linsey coats and bedgowns" which he says were the "universal dress of women in early times," and further suggested that "they would make a strange figure at the present day."

The garments made in Augusta and Botetourt had been worn out and a different material was brought into use. The weed now known to us as wild nettle (*Urtica dioica*) then furnished the material which served to clothe the persons of our sires and dames. It was cut down while yet green and treated in much the same way and manner in which flax is now treated. The fibrous bark, with the exception of the shortness of the fibers, seemed to be adapted to the same uses. When this flax was prepared it was mixed with buffalo hair and woven into a substantial cloth in which the men and women were clothed. It was a true maxim, "necessity is the mother of invention".

## HOUSE FURNITURE

(From Bickley's History of Tazewell County, Page 392)

For several years after the settlement of this country, the dinnerware for the table consisted of a few pewter dishes, plates and spoons but mostly of wooden bowls, trenchers and noggins. If the latter were scarce, gourds and hardshelled squashes made up for the deficiency. Iron pots, knives and forks were brought from the east, along with salt and iron, on pack horses.

These articles of tableware corresponded very well with the articles of diet. "Hog and Hominy" were proverbial for the dish of which they were the component parts, Johnny cake and pone were, at the first settlement of the country, the only forms of bread in use for breakfast and dinner. At supper, milk and mush were the standard dishes. When milk was not plentiful, which was often the case owing to the scarcity of cattle or the want of proper pasture for them, the substantial dish of hominy had to supply the place for it. Mush was frequently eaten with sweetened water, molasses, bear's oil, or the gravy of fried meat.

In the whole display of furniture, the delft, china and silver were unknown. It did not then, as now, require contributions from the four quarters of the globe to furnish the breakfast table with the silver from Mexico, the coffee from the West Indies, the tea from China and the delft and porcelain from Europe or Asia. Yet, a homely fare with unsightly cabins and furniture produced a hardy race who planted the first footsteps of civilization in the immense regions of the west. Inured to hardships, bravery and labor from early youth, they sustained with manly fortitude the fatigue of the chase. With strong arms they turned the wilderness into fruitful fields and have left to their descendants the rich inheritance of an immense empire blessed with peace, wealth and prosperity.

### CUSTOMS IN BLAND COUNTY

In common with fellow "mountaineers" the world over, Bland Countians have always had their own peculiarities as regard customs, manners, habits, and speech. Emphasis is herein given to those peculiarities that more or less characterized our forebears; however, the vagaries of society and the passing of time have not completely erased all of them from our midst.

Although most of our early settlers were of Scotch-Irish, Anglo-Saxon, and Germanic stock, and although many of their mores and conventions either sprang from homeland customs or were verbatim continuations thereof, every frontier has a way of adding to time-tested modes of life. There is no doubt that our ancestors in Bland County found new means of expression, new emotional outlets, and a new way of life when this county was young. Some of their habits were, without doubt, linked to their past by the connective influence that always ties a society to its earliest beginning; but the new-found seasoning afforded by this new land surely must have brightened their lives and rendered them more livable.

### Weddings

Weddings were really great events in the early days. They were usually solemnized at home, since churches were few and far between, and they were attended by all who could possibly be there. It took days or weeks to

prepare for the big occasion: tables full of "vittles" consisting of pork, beef, turkey, bear, chicken, venison, squirrel, cabbage, shucky beans, cheese, pickles, hominy, and corn bread were made ready, and whatever "finery" the neighborhood possessed was brought out and worked over to a turn. Ladies for miles around took part in these preparations, then, on the appointed day, guests set out by horse, ox-cart, or on foot to the wedding site.

The wedding ceremony itself took place at noon and lasted for a very few minutes, and immediately afterward came dinner, which lasted for hours. Gourds and hard-shelled squashes served as cups and tumblers, with the razor-sharp hunting knives of the men doing yeoman service when the household's table knives proved inadequate. After dinner came dancing which sometimes lasted for days. Reels and square sets were the order of the day with the children jigging and cutting out as the fiddlers played "Sour Wood Mountain", "Turkey in the Straw", "Buffalo Gals", "Old Dan Tucker", and "Give the Fiddler a Dram". When the latter was played, someone always complied by sneaking the fiddlers a drink of corn whiskey or brandy, and the music became livelier and livelier. If, after four or five hours, anyone tried to slip off for a cat-nap, he was dragged back and paraded on the floor while the fiddlers played "Hang Out 'til Morning". The fiddlers were usually accompanied by a dulcimer player and banjo picker.

### Funerals

Whole neighborhoods assembled for funerals and burials, which often were not conducted so closely together as they are today. When the news of a death spread, neighbors brought in food; helped with the chores; dug the grave; and "sat up" with the family of the deceased. Mourning rings were sent to the minister and pall-bearers and, in some cases, to a circle of friends. Such rings were of gold and black trim. It was mentioned earlier that sometimes funerals were not conducted at the time of the burials, which was due to the fact that ministers could not always be had when needed. A story is told of a man who brought his new wife to the funeral of his former wife.

### Quilting

A quilting was one of the friendly and social functions in this section in which both young and old participated.

A home-made quilt was a work of art and patience combined. It was usually made of scraps of wedding gowns and other garments cut into every imaginable shape and size. It was made in a frame which sometimes rested on legs but generally was suspended from the ceiling; and as the women quilted, they exercised the female prerogative of talking. The male members of the quilters' households performed mainly in this work by helping to eat the bounteous supper and joining in the dances which invariably followed.

Other occasions which served to draw neighbors together were corn shucking, bean hulling, wood cutting and barn raising. One of the more widely observed of these was corn shucking, which often was done while a quilting was in progress. The men would gather with their shuckin' pins at the pile of corn which awaited at the granary or barn. They made a contest of it by giving points for the red and speckled ears of corn they found. The man with the most points had the privilege of kissing the girl of his choice.

Church services were remarkable for their social as well as religious aspects. In addition to exercising their religious freedom, our ancestors used the church as a means of hearing the news; promoting both new and old friendships; and, particularly among the younger folk, of meeting and whispering "sweet nothings" to each other.

Court Days offered even a better opportunity for the men to congregate. Court was held once a month, usually at a store. It was a time for attending to business and discussing community affairs; swapping eggs and butter for needed "store boughten" items: and a not-to-be-passed-up opportunity for horse trading.

### Home Remedies

This mountainous section was not without its superstitions and home remedies. The old granny woman who helped bring babies into the world and bury the dead could cure anything and she had never heard of penicillin or any of the other antibiotics our educated doctors use today. Here are some of the remedies she and her clientele used in the early days:

A small bag of asafetida worn around the neck would protect one from colds and influenza. Snake root was the remedy for headache; oak tea for worms, and catnip



tea for the colic. Calamus root relieved countless tummy aches. The cure for ague was simple: wrap a spider in an old quilt and hang it around the neck. Pokeweed leaves made a good poultice for sores, and peppermint tea cured indigestion. The warm blood of a black cat or black chicken, dripping over the affected area, would cure shingles. Chimney soot stopped bleeding when applied to a wound or ruptured vein. Sore eyes were treated with slippery elm bark. Pine needles, boiled in a small amount of water, strained and sweetened with syrup, was good cough syrup. Blackberry wine or brandy was a popular and sure cure for flux or diarrhea. Stump water, used on the first day of May, would remove freckles from a boy's or girl's face; while carrying a buckeye in a pocket kept one from contracting rheumatism.

Many poultices were used for colds and infection. Green cow manure, applied directly to an infected area, was a sure-fire cure. Snuff mixed with lard and applied warm to the chest was good for pneumonia. An onion poultice, made by frying onions in lard, straining and applying warm to the chest, was excellent for chest colds and croup. Itch had no chance for survival when fought with a sulphur-lard ointment liberally applied; while a piece of fat meat would draw out the poison from a nail or thorn wound. For snake bite, pressing a bottle of turpentine against the wound caused the withdrawal of poison from the wound and into the bottle of turpentine.

Various leaf potions were brewed and mixed, and each had its following. Juice of the Jimson weed was guaranteed to make a maiden's eyes sparkle, thus precluding any possibility of a shortage of suitors; and these same maidens said this magic verse when they spotted a buzzard in the sky: "Wonderful buzzard in your flight, if I should see my true love before tomorrow night, flap your wings three times before you go out of sight."

For strange complaints, it was best to seek help from the seventh child of a seventh child. A child born after its father's death was said to have power to cure certain diseases and to be lucky in love.

### Superstitions

Our forefathers, in common with all peoples everywhere and in all ages, were superstitious. Here are some that were in style in Bland County a long time ago, and we suspect that at least a few of them have carried over to the present.

It was considered bad luck to walk under a ladder, to break a mirror, to pick a five-leaf clover, or to return immediately to a house after leaving it. If company (visitors) came in at one door and left at another, bad luck was certain to come. It was also bad luck to visit anyone on New Year's Day; however, if a dark-haired girl came to your house on that day, good luck followed — a light-haired person, bad luck. Never take ashes out on January first or you will be taking them out the whole year. If a bird flies against the window or enters the house, bad luck will fall on a member of the household.

Looking at the new moon through brush would bring one month of bad luck. Good luck came from having the hair cut on a new moon. Bad weather always followed a hoot owl's call in the day time or whenever redbirds gathered around the house. Never start a project on Friday unless it can be finished the same day, otherwise it will never be completed.

Rubbing butter on a cat's nose tamed it and caused it to stay at home. Your cow would have to give bloody milk if you killed a toad; and if you should pick up a toad, look out for warts.

It was a sign of good luck if the palm of the right hand itched, the left, bad luck. If a person found a pin pointing at him, picking it up brought good luck. To drop a knife on the floor meant that a man was coming for supper; a fork dropped foretold a woman's coming. A falling star was the sign that a soul was going to heaven, while death was foretold by a howling dog or a screech owl.

A snake killed and hung belly up in dry weather would produce rain within 24 hours. To kill the first snake of the season meant you would conquer your enemies; if it escaped, your enemies remained.

Frolicking animals, either domestic or wild, foretold approaching storms. Any time a spring rose during dry weather, rain followed. If you lived in Bland County and heard a train whistle blowing at Wytheville, you had to expect bad weather. If the sun shines during a rain, watch for another rain the next day. (Some said this was a sign that the devil was beating his wife.)

Sauerkraut made during pregnancy would not kraut (ferment). It was not wise to have an operation when the Zodiac sign was in the heart or during dog days.

Raising an umbrella in the house would bring bad luck. The safest place to be during an electrical storm is on a feather bed. Any time there is a death in the family, have someone from the household of the deceased go out and tell the bees the news of the death, so they won't leave.

**CHAPTER III**  
**FAMILIES AND OLD HOMESTEADS**



**Mr. John Shrader (born 1811) and Mrs. Shrader (born 1816)**  
**(Grandparents of P. F. Shrader and**  
**Mrs. Charles Morehead)**

**Representing Typical Pioneers and Early Settlers**  
**in Bland County**  
**(The cabin was built by them)**



## ROBINETT HISTORY

Samuel Robinett came to what is now Bland County around 1725 from East Tennessee and his mother was a full blooded Cherokee Indian. The Robinett family is of French origin. Samuel was drowned in the Watagua River at Elizabethton, Tennessee while taking a drove of hogs south. His widow married a Dunn and his children were scattered at an early age. (This information was compiled by Mr. Way Penley, a direct descendent.)

A Daniel Robinett married Mary McFarland on January 4, 1786 and it is recorded in court records in Wythe County that 'May 26, 1790 Daniel Robinett was recommended to the Governor as Lieutenant of Wythe County Militia'. 'July 9, 1799 a bridle way was established from Burkes Garden to Michael Robinett's on Walkers Creek'. 'August 8, 1797 Samuel Robinett qualified as Lieutenant in Militia'. A Michael Robinett married Mary Justice, daughter of Daniel Justice, on August 22, 1786. Anne Robinett married James Waddle on January 25, 1786.

A record is listed of a descendent of the first Samuel, Daniel, who was born October 6, 1764 and married Anne Devors who was born November 22, 1774. They were the parents of eleven children from whom a large portion of the Robinetts descended. Anne married a Waddle; Mary married Samuel Harman; Hiram married Rebecca Devors and they lived about a mile west of Bland on the Laurel Road; James (Captain Jim) married Jerusha Newberry and they lived in the Point Pleasant community; Emma married George Steel and their home was on Clear Fork; George Robinett did not marry and lived at the home place; Sophrania lived with George; Margaret married Daniel Waddle, Elizabeth, Leroy and Daniel were the remaining, unmarried children.

George Robinett was one of the six commissioners appointed upon the formation of Bland County for the erection of the court house and to lay off the county into magisterial districts.

## THE JUSTICES

John Justice, great grandfather of Mrs. Eugene Davidson, settled on Wolf Creek the latter part of the 18th

century. This is verified by the birth of a child born to John Justice and wife on Wolf Creek in 1796; another child was born to this union in 1798 and six more children by 1810.

After the death of John Justice in 1829, his wife patented the land east of their well on Wolf Creek to a Mr. Wynn, which land is now owned by Charlie Starks. Another Mr. Justice patented land from the ancestral home place to a Mr. Murphy. This later became the land of Edd Stowers and presently owned by Mark and Paul Blessing. Another Mr. Justice patented the Cameron Farm and built a house upon this property. The Camerons moved to this farm later and used the creek bed as a road. Records of patents by John Justice and the purchase of the Cameron place from a Mr. Justice are evidenced by records in Tazewell, Virginia. Both of these farms were located about a mile from the Wolf Creek Road and its intersection with Rts. 21 and 52.

Jane, a daughter of John Justice, married Russell Johnson of Giles County. They were the parents of John R. and Jess Newton Johnson; the latter was the father of Mrs. Eugene Davidson. Jim and Mac Davidson, sons of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Davidson, represent the fourth generation to have lived on the original Davidson homestead.

## WILSON

Col. John Wilson served in the House of Burgesses in Virginia for twenty-seven years and died in 1773 in Rockbridge Co., Va.

His son, James Wilson, born Dec. 22, 1739, came to the western side of Bland Co. and settled there in 1776. He died there Aug. 30, 1824 and was buried in Sharon Cemetery.

James had three children, John, William and Eddy (or Audley). John, born Dec. 1, 1770, married Elizabeth Miller, the daughter of Henry Miller, Sr. and Rebecca Boggs Miller, Feb. 23, 1792.

The descendants of Col. John and his son, James, are still living on a part of the original land grant near Ceres, Virginia.

Six generations of the Wilson family are buried in the Sharon cemetery at Ceres, Virginia.

## NEELS

Thomas Neel and Ellen McFarlane Neel moved from Augusta County to Wolf Creek (Grapefield, Bland Co.) in about the year 1757. To this union was born six sons, Robert, Alexander, William, Duncan, Zachariah and James; four daughters, Kate, Jennie, Tillie and Betsy. One son was killed in the War of 1812.

It was in the home of Robert Neel, son of Thomas Neel, that the wonderful William Elbert Muncy was converted. It has been said that the only school he ever attended was a three-month term taught by Thomas Stuart Walker.

## THE WALKERS

### THOMAS STUART WALKER

Thomas Stuart Walker, son of Thomas and Eleanor, was born near Peterstown, Monroe County, W. Va. on March 13 or 19, 1802 and died on Clear Fork, Bland County, in 1879. Thus far, it has not been determined the date he moved to Clear Fork. He became exceptionally well educated and for seven years was tutored by a Mr. McDaniel of Oxford University. He was a teacher, farmer and surveyor. Almost, if not entirely, at his own expense he built Nebo Methodist Church on Clear Fork and for many years was its superintendent.

He married Christina (Kitty) Waggoner, born, it is thought, in Tazewell, now Bland County. She was the daughter of Daniel Waggoner and his wife, Lucy Ann Day to whom he was married before the year 1798. Daniel Waggoner was remembered on Clear Fork as a pioneer and Indian scout. Daniel, Benjamin, William and Thomas, sons of Thomas and Kitty, all served in the Civil War. Thomas, first as a lieutenant and later as captain of Company G, 36 Virginia Infantry. He died of fever when about forty years old.

## GREEN MEADOWS

Green Meadows was built by John Grayson on the tract of land to which he moved in Bland County in about 1795. This tract of land was known as the 'Daniel Justice Place' and John inherited it from his father, William Grayson of Montgomery County. The house, or tavern, was built about 1820 by expert local craftsmen and of materials made on the place, except for doors and windows, which were brought from Lynchburg, Virginia by four horse wagons. It stands on the north side of an old stage coach road, probably an extension of the Salem Turnpike, and parts of the old roadbed are still visible. Here were born the children of John and Agnes (Whitlock) Grayson: Captain Andrew Jackson Grayson of the Bland County Company in the Stonewall Brigade, who married Rosalie Johnson; Cynthia, who married Randolph Grayson; Jane, who married William Bane; Pierce, William, Frank, and Julia Anne.

The house is a two and a half story building made of bricks of the glazed Williamsburg type and laid in the early brick and a half row. The hardware — locks, keys, nails, hinges and hand fasteners for the windows — were all hand wrought in a blacksmith shop. In the attic it can be seen that wooden pegs were used to hold the hand-hewed timbers together. The paint used on the woodwork is likewise of the Williamsburg type; the wainscoting contains flowers in beautiful colors, while the mantels are unique in that through the use of paint they have the appearance of marble. A room on the third floor was so





constructed that no steps can be seen as a means of reaching it, so apparently, a removable ladder was used. It was either a school room for children or a prison for slaves.

The outbuildings were made of logs with walnut shingles used as roofing. A dairy was located east of the kitchen door on the lower floor and between the dairy and house was what could today be called a "breeze-way". Water for the dairy was conveyed from a spring on Brushy Mountain through wooden pipes. A row of slave cabins stood just east of the dairy.

A tall log smokehouse was located to the south and the barn was located in front of and to the east of the main building, very close to the stage road. The barn, built of logs and on two levels, was so constructed that a four horse wagon could be driven into the loft, unloaded at either end, turned and driven out the way it had entered. A granary stood east of the barn.

John Grayson's daughter, Cynthia, married Randolph Grayson and they gave the acre for the Bland Cemetery in 1872, also one half an acre was deeded by them for the Baptist Church. Cynthia and son Charles deeded the land for the St. Mathews Lutheran Church. The children of Cynthia and Randolph Grayson were Mary Jane, who married John C. Shannon, Elizabeth W., who married John McGinnis, Louisa, Charles and John A.

Green Meadows remained in the hands of a descendant of John Grayson until recently when Mr. E. F. Repass purchased it. Captain A. J. Grayson was born here in 1832 and at the time of his marriage in 1856 the tract consisted of 1,000 acres. The population consisted of three white people and 13 colored people.

### **"HOLLY BROOK"**

The farm called "Holly Brook", located in the eastern part of the county, derives its name from luxuriant growths of holly along a bold, clear stream that comes from unusually large springs in a bottom near the house. Henry Harman, Sr., pioneer and Indian fighter extraordinary, (known as "Old Skygusta", great warrior, by the Indians), lived and died here, age 95 years. He was born in 1726; moved to Southwest Virginia from North

Carolina in 1775 to probably the "The High Rock Farm"; and then to the D. L. Tickle or George Bogle farm, as it was then called. He exchanged this farm with William Munsey for the "Holly Brook" farm in 1790. The tract was patented by William Munsey, December 7, 1782, and conveyed to Harmon, June 8, 1790. It was surveyed for him on September 3, 1801. His youngest son, Elias and wife Polly (Davis) Harman, reared a large family on this farm, among whom was William Neel Harman, often called the "father" of Bland County. He owned this farm until 1898 when Mr. Fayette Newberry purchased it. Mr. John C. Mustard and Effie (Wagner) Mustard, direct descendant of the first owner, William Munsey, purchased the farm in 1920 and sold it in 1942 to Mr. Henry Sarver, who is at present the owner. The original house, built by Henry Harman, consisted of a two-story log building of four large rooms and two halls, equal in size to the rooms. The two downstairs rooms contained fireplaces. John C. Mustard added a kitchen and dining room to the house in 1923. The out buildings consisted of a corn house, meat house and blacksmith shop built of logs. Kimberling and Nobusiness Creek meet at the lower end of the farm and the spot is called the "Blue Hole", a favorite, though dangerous, swimming spot for the youth of the community. Many Indian relics have been found in the bottom. William Neel Harman's mother, Polly Davis died September 23, 1861 and he left a written statement: "Around her grave at her interment the writer formed his first company — Company F. 8th Virginia Cavalry, as a tribute to her before starting to serve his country in the field." He rose to the rank of Colonel. William Neel Harman's father, Elias, had freed his slaves in writing March 25, 1828.

## DUNNS

The Dunns were among the earlier settlers of Augusta County, Virginia. John Dunn was a colonial soldier and served in the Revolutionary War. He, along with his family, emigrated to the Southwest in the 1760's and records indicate that he owned land at Jopper, Roanoke County, in 1774. He had claims for large tracts of land on New River, Fayette County, West Virginia. John Dunn was exempt from taxes in December, 1790, because of age and infirmities.

Thomas Dunn, son of John Dunn, settled at Peak Creek in 1767. He also acquired land on Mack's Creek in 1777 and sold that tract to Francis Allison in 1778. He was one of the earlier settlers on Walkers Creek, Bland County. Entries in land books in the 1770's and 1780's indicate that he owned eight tracts of land totaling 2,178 acres which was located on the southside of Walkers Creek. In later years the property became known as the Ambrose and John Grayson land and in more recent years the Fayette Grayson place. The property is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. M. L. Greever.

James Devor married the daughter of Thomas Dunn and lived for sometime on what later became the Samuel Newberry farm. Joseph Dunn, son of Thomas Dunn, acquired land north of Bland which later became known as the Wash Dunn property.

## THE MUNCYS

The first of the Muncy family to settle in what is now Bland County was Holton Muncy. He was born in Rockingham County in 1750, the youngest son of Samuel Muncy. On March 4, 1776, Holton Muncy married Alice Layne who was the daughter of Tunis and Margaret Van-Pelt, who were very aristocratic people, Holton Muncy and his father, Samuel, lived in Elk Garden, Russell County, as early as 1774. The appraisment of Holton's estate in 1830 reveals that his home was found in "A list of the number of men's names from 18 years of age to 50 in Captain Patton's command during the Revolutionary War."

The exact date that Holton Muncy and his family emigrated to Bland County cannot be accurately ascertained. At any rate, and surely a short time after 1776, Holton Muncy came to Bland and settled some two miles east of Bland Court House. It is most significant and worthy of mention that the fifth generation of Muncys now reside and operate the farm where Holton Muncy originally settled. These facts were related and verified by Miss Addie Muncy and her mother, Aunt Josie, who now reside at the original homestead.

In the early land surveys of Montgomery Couty, an entry made on October 12, 1782 is proof of ownership by Holton Muncy of 150 acres of land in what is now Bland

County. This is further evidenced by deed of land to Henry and Nancy Carmen of 86 acres by Holton Muncy in 1791, which land was located on Walkers Creek, Bland County. Holton Muncy was Minister of the Court and appointed Constable of Montgomery County in 1790.

The old Muncy homestead was a sacred trust to him because it had sheltered his indomitable spirit down through the years.

Tunis Muncy, son of Holton Muncy, was born at the homestead on May 7, 1781. Andrew Jackson Muncy, son of Tunis Muncy, was born April 26, 1822. He married Sarah Peery, who came from a very prominent family of Virginians. Andrew Jackson Muncy became Magistrate of Bland County in 1878. His sons were: C. P. Muncy, Thomas Jackson, Dr. James Lovell and Jesse Archibald Muncy, whom we affectionately remember as uncle Jess and who was born in 1870. In 1896 he married Josie Green, a member of a prominent Virginia family. Her father, Robert Crutchfield Green, was the first Confederate soldier from his home county of Smyth to shed blood for the cause he espoused. Mr. Green resided in Bland after the close of the Civil War. Aunt Josie Muncy is one of our oldest and most beloved citizens of Bland. Her alert mind sees beyond hearth and home to national and international problems. She is a student of current problems and has a knowledge of language adequate to express her ideas in an entertaining manner.

Uncle Jess was a "born doctor" and his remedies for man and beast were known for miles around the country side. He was fond of bear hunting and raising fine horses.

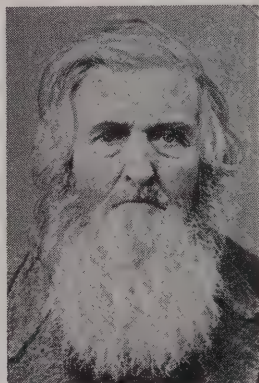
## THE BRUCES

The Rev. Joshua Bruce was born in Albermarle County, Virginia, October 23rd, 1778. He was the son of George Bruce, who had come down into Virginia from Pennsylvania, and settled on land granted by George III of England. In the latter part of the Eighteenth Century, Joshua moved to Wythe Co. (now Bland Co.) Virginia, where he secured a grant of land on Walkers Creek on which he erected a large log house. The house is still in use, having had additions made to it and having been remodeled during the years.



Joshua added to his original grant until he owned between fifteen hundred and two thousand acres of land. One tract of 108 acres he bought at a tax sale for \$15.00. On September 17, 1801, Joshua was married to Miss Sarah Hern. Their children were:

James Bruce, born Sept. 30, 1802  
Isaiah Bruce, born May 31, 1804  
John Bruce, born June 16, 1806  
Josiah Bruce, born March 16, 1808  
Anna Bruce, born Jan. 8, 1810  
Susannah Bruce, born Nov. 1, 1812  
William Bruce, born Sept. 26, 1813  
Elizabeth Bruce, born Jan. 30, 1816  
Harvey Bruce, born Jan. 17, 1818  
Noah B. Bruce, born Sept. 2, 1820  
Enoch G. Bruce, born Oct. 5, 1824  
Lydia H. Bruce, born Feb. 19, 1827



**James Bruce**

James Bruce, eldest of the twelve children of Joshua and Sarah, married Elizabeth Justice, and at Joshua's death came into possession of the "Home Place," which after being divided among twelve children, was considerably reduced in size.

James and Elizabeth had eight children. Joshua Henderson, the eldest, married Margaret Anderson Hoge, a sister of Dr. John Hoge. To this union was born seven children. J. Henderson Bruce died February 2, 1904 and willed his second son, James Edward, the home place.

The Rev. James Edward Bruce was married to Edna Miranda Harris, a daughter of Dr. Alexander Nelson Harris and Edna Haynes Harris, of Jonesboro, Tenn. Two children were born to this union, Haynes Hoge Bruce and Hazel Edna Bruce. On his retirement from active service as a minister in Holston Conference, James Edward returned to the farm where he spent his last days, passing away on June 23, 1915.

Hazel Edna Bruce was married to Gilbert Raymond Repass on May 6th, 1916. At the death of Haynes Hoge Bruce, who never married, the farm passed to Hazel Bruce Repass.

Five generations have owned and loved the old farm, which one of its owners named "Seclusion."

In the early days, long before the County was formed, the home of Rev. Joshua Bruce was used for Methodist class meetings and preaching services, and many of his descendants have been ministers of the Gospel.



**The Bruce Home**

### **THE TOWNLEY FAMILY**

The Townleys came to America from England in 1622. The first U. S. Census which was taken in 1790, listed John Townley, III, of Essex County, Virginia.

One of John the III's sons was John Mellicue D. Townley, who married Elizabeth Ball, a sister of President George Washington's mother, Mary Ball. To this union was born Mellicue James Townley, who married Edna Davis Taylor, a relative of President Zachary Taylor.

John William Summerfield Townley, who was born in Lewisburg, Virginia, married Mary Katherine Harmon of Bland County on December 16, 1872. They moved from Amherst County to Bland County about the year 1816 to the Point Pleasant community. John William Summerfield was a farmer and operated a tan yard on his farm, named Walkers Mountain View. He sold merchandise throughout this area before coming to the county to settle. He served in the Civil War and died at his home in Bland in 1919 at the age of 84.

Mellicue Samuel Townley, son of John William Summerfield, married Rebecca Alice Duncan of Bland County on November 10, 1898 at Point Pleasant. Numerous descendants of this couple now reside in Bland County.

## GROSECLOSE

Peter Groseclose was born Feb. 23, 1730, in the Upper Palatinate of Germany. He came to Lancaster, Penn., in May, 1750 and on to Virginia about 1780. He settled about two miles west of what is now Ceres, Va. He married Magdalena Ott of Zurich, Switzerland. They had seven children as follows:

Peter, Jr., who married Elizabeth Sluss in 1782. He was killed by a falling tree in 1805. He was known as One-Armed Peter, who lost an arm in the Battle of Brandywine in the Revolutionary War. His wife was born in Pennsylvania in 1776. After his death his widow built a dam and grist mill at the home on the North Fork of the Holston River. The home is now occupied by B. Dodd Groseclose.

Margaret, born in 1760, married Jacob Spangler in 1782 and died in 1832. This Jacob Spangler built the Spangler Fort on land granted to him in 1782.

Elizabeth, who married John Perciful in 1782.

Adam, who married Elizabeth Kimberlin.

Barbara, who married Nathan Bryant in 1791.

Jacob, who married Esther Spracher.

Henry, who married Elizabeth Copenbarger and built the home now occupied by the widow of Milton Groseclose, which is near the site of the first Peter Groseclose home.

The land grants of Peter Groseclose, Sr. and Peter, Jr. were signed by Patrick Henry.

An extract from the certificate of baptism of Peter Groseclose, Sr. and his wife, Elizabeth, is recorded in German script in the records of Sharon Church at Ceres, Va. Seven generations of Grosecloses are buried in the Sharon cemetery.

One of the oldest, if not the oldest house, in what is now Bland County is now occupied by Conrad Groseclose on Highway 42, two miles west of Ceres.

From available records this house was built by Peter Groseclose on land he obtained in an original land grant from the Commonwealth of Virginia signed by the Governor, Patrick Henry, in 1785. The house was built for his son, Henry Groseclose, who married Elizabeth Copenbarger in 1793. It is built of huge hand-hewn logs notched and put together with hand made nails and wooden pegs.

As the story goes, Henry was quite a large and very strong young man. In building the house a large log was ready to be put in place when the workmen suggested they eat lunch before trying to lift it in place. But young Henry, anxious to get the house ready for his young bride, picked up the log and put it in place alone.

The log house as originally built had a breeze way between the main house and kitchen and servants quarters. Around 1880 this was torn away and the kitchen and dining room made adjoining the main part of the house which was also weather-boarded.

The house is a three-story house with basement; and in the attic, which was used for weaving, the old home-made loom frame is still stored.

The house was passed from Henry Groseclose to his son, Dr. William Groseclose, who left it to his son, Adam Dallas Groseclose, a Civil War Veteran, who in turn left it to his son, Milton Groseclose. Conrad Groseclose, the son of Milton Groseclose, now resides in this home.





This old house was built in 1785 or 90 by Peter Groseclose, Jr., the oldest son of Peter Groseclose, Sr., who moved with his father to Ceres around 1780. He married Elizabeth Sluss in 1782, a cousin of the Sluss family that was massacred by the Indians. He built his home on the land adjoining his father on the North Fork of the Holston River, which is approximately three miles west of Ceres.

He died in 1814 and his wife, Elizabeth, built a mill near the house on the river. The court records state a committee was appointed to inspect it. Their son, "Miller Jake," as he was called, inherited the house and mill.

Miller Jake left the mill and house to his son, Joe Groseclose, who left it to his son, Benjamin Dodd Groseclose, who still resides in this old home said to be the original house built by Peter Groseclose, Jr.

Peter Groseclose, Jr., entered the Revolutionary War while a resident of the state of Pennsylvania. He was in the Battle of Bunker Hill, lost an arm at the Battle of Brandywine, and was in service until the close of the Revolutionary War.

The mill, which is no longer standing, is remembered by many of the older citizens of the community.



## SPANGLER

Peter Spangler, born in 1714 in Germany, came to America in 1740, at twenty-six years of age. He died in 1794, at what is now Ceres, Bland County, Virginia and is supposedly buried in Sharon cemetery. He married Margaret \_\_\_\_\_. Their children were:

Jacob (B.) 1756, married Margaret Groseclose in 1782. He built the Spangler Fort, a short distance south of Ceres, Virginia.

Peter, Jr., married Elizabeth Piper Huddle, widow of John Huddle.

George married Ketrin \_\_\_\_\_

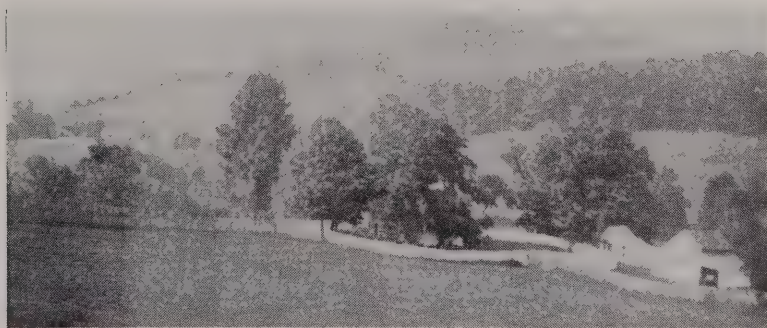
John married Catherina \_\_\_\_\_

Charity married James Cameron

Joel Spangler who married Mrs. Greever Hudson, and Capt. Andy Spangler, who married Angeline Shannon were brothers and descendants of Jacob Spangler and Margaret Groseclose.

## FINLEY FAMILY AND LAND WARRANT

James Finley, Sr., Captain of Militia, was among those who won particular applause for their great activity and full execution of all orders in the Revolutionary War. He received a large tract of land lying in Bland County on the Crab Orchard for his services in the Revolutionary War and it was to this tract that his son, James



Jr., came. The tract contained about one thousand acres, and was located where the present town of Bland now stands. The Finley farm, now in possession of Mrs. A. W. Suiter, is part of the original acreage. February 26, 1783, part of this plot was deeded to Thomas Dunn.

That part of the Finley lands, now in the possession of Mrs. A. W. Suiter, has been in the Finley family since 1783. Captain Finley's son, James, married Eunice Bonham, and their son, James, married Rebecca Dunn; their son, Thomas Nye Finley, married first a Miss Ewald and then Laura Lester. Thomas Nye Finley and Laura Lester were the parents of Thomas Nye, Jr., Lute, Faye and Laura.

The Finley home was built about 1850 and is a white frame building with a large fireplace in each room. The back part of the house has been added in recent years, but the front portion is the original.

The Finley family are of Irish descent, settling first in Pennsylvania, then emigrating to present Wythe and Bland Counties.

### AMBROSE GRAYSON HOMESTEAD

The original farm consisted of two hundred seventeen acres, having thereon one dwelling house of wood, one and a half stories, 24 feet by 18 feet, one barn, one meat house, one corn house and one spring house, all of which were valued at twelve hundred dollars, as shown by a personal property tax ticket of 1815. These buildings were built in the 1790's by Ambrose Grayson. The house was enlarged for the convenience of an aunt of James Wayne and Emily (Steel) Grayson, the addition being a story and half consisting of two rooms, hall and separate stairway. William Wayne Grayson inherited the farm from his father and James Floyd Grayson purchased it from his brother. James McNutt Grayson owned the home and farm until 1919 when he sold it to Mr. Howard Stowers, and the heirs of Mr. Stowers now own it. The farm was known in 1795 as the Cold Patrick Plantation.

The house and buildings were constructed of logs, dove tailed together. The house has been weather-boarded; however, the barn is still as it was originally with the exception of new roofing. The floor of the barn is of huge

boards put together with wooden pegs about two inches in diameter. The house is located on the old stage coach road, or main road, to the salt works about two miles west of Bland.

## NEWBERRY

The earliest recorded ancestors of the Newberry family have been traced down to Normandy, France, and to 900 A.D. where they were feudal barons with large estates. When William the Conqueror, was preparing for his invasion of England in 1066, he was given 60 ships fully manned by the Newberrys at their own expense. As a reward they received 90 lordships in various parts of England. The most famous of these was in Warwickshire and this was Warwick Castle. Today this is one of England's show places. The Newberrys occupied this for over three hundred years, but they are listed as not building all of the present castle, but establishing the park and building hospitals and churches. After no male direct heirs were to succeed, the title of Earl of Warwick went out of the name by marriage.

Other branches of the name came to America as early as 1630 and took a prominent part in the establishment of the New England states. Others went to Ireland and are identified there as taking part in the activities of Northern Ireland in various ways.

The first Newberry of this section of Virginia ran away from home in Donegal, Ireland, on account of a step-father he disliked. He came as a stowaway on a ship when only a small lad and never returned to his native land. After reaching America he had to work seven years to pay for his passage to someone whom he met on the boat. This did not hinder him from wishing to become a Virginia citizen and land owner in his adopted country.

After reaching manhood he became a colonial soldier, as recorded in Crozier's and various other publications, serving the American cause against the British. This was as early as in 1759. He received a grant of land and procured adjoining tracts from the "Loyal Land Company" which had established territory for settlement of the pioneers west of the Allegheny Mountains. However, an earlier record shows this Samuel Newberry as being in or



about Bedford County before his land was granted him in what is now Bland County. His first wife was named Rosanna although her maiden name is not known. His second wife was Bethiah Begley and they settled on his grant where he reared his family and is buried. One daughter named Finnell was of the first marriage. Of the second, he had these children: Samuel II, Robert, James, David, Joseph, Elizabeth and Rachel.

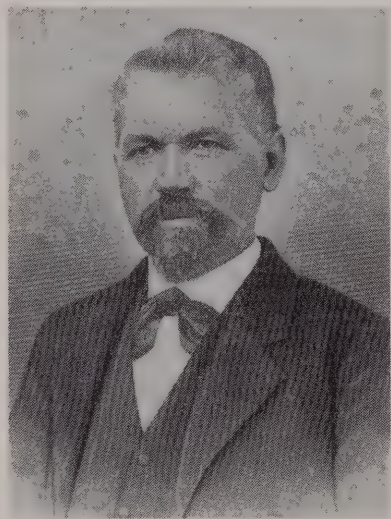
Only Samuel II remained at the homestead as most of the others went to Wise County, some on West and some to Tennessee. His daughter Elizabeth married John Baldwin and went to Tennessee in the early part of 1800. Three of her grandsons in one family became Methodist ministers. Samuel II was not destined to become a farmer as his sole occupation in life. Born December 25, 1773 in what is now Bland County, then known as Montgomery County, he was licensed to preach as a Methodist minister July 4, 1812. His library consisted of the Bible and Bunyan's Pilgrim Progress, and his circuit commenced at Saltville and extended up to the head of North Holston, down Walkers Creek to New River at Narrows, up Wolf Creek so as to include Clear Fork and Burkes Garden. Think of the extent of this territory of mountains and valleys with no roads, few settlers and you have an idea of his work. The country was an original forest with no churches, no school houses and the nearest post office twenty-five miles away with few contacts with other places.

Samuel married Eunice Powers, whose family had come from Vermont and settled in what is now the eastern part of Bland County. They had ten children: Mary, Henry, Jerusha, Allen Taylor, Elizabeth, Julia, Nancy, Jane, Lucinda and Esther. All were given an education above the average as the conditions of the country would at that time permit. He also started them all on the road to permanent independence. This generation, too, scattered to other sections. Henry went to Missouri and then Texas, where one of his sons was treasurer of Haraman County, Texas. Elizabeth married Rev. Reuben Steele and they lived in Scott County, Virginia. Julia married Dunn Bogle; Jerusha married James Robinette; Nancy married Jonas Powers; Jane married a Mr. Bogle; Lucinda married John Henderson; Mary married Alexander Suiter; and Esther married George Suiter.

Only Allen Taylor, born 1803, remained on the farm along Walkers Creek, Bland County, dealing in cattle and

other livestock. In that day Maryland was the nearest market and cattle had to be driven on foot that distance. Living conditions were typical of the first half century after the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The pioneers of Bland County were people of great moral worth. Nothing obstructed their vision of carving out for themselves a better way of life where they chose to settle, instead of going to places where some had made the way easier for others to begin.

Allen Taylor Newberry was married three times. First, to Elizabeth Bogle by whom he had ten children: Harman, Denry, Captain Samuel, Mary, Rev. Robert, Hester Ann, Elizabeth Caroline, John W. Dunn B., and



Nancy Eunice. His second marriage was to Caroline Painter and they had no children. She died in 1882. His third wife was Nancy E. Gross. He was now over 80 years old when his son Allen Taylor, Jr. was born. A year later he had another son, Harvey G. This second Newberry home site continues to be farmed by Allen Taylor Newberry, Jr. where he and his sons have established a record for purebred stock raising.

The oldest child of Allen Taylor Newberry, Sr., Harman, desired more than a common education so financed himself at Emory and Henry College.

Endowed with a very alert mind, he accumulated vast acreage in several states and was a dealer in livestock, President of the Bank of Bland County and was the first sheriff of Bland County during the Civil War, having traded places with a brother who was elected and wanted to join the army.

He spent long hours in the saddle looking after his extensive interests and duties, to which he attributed his good health. A broken hip caused by a horse falling on

him caused his last years to be spent in a wheel chair. He married Mary Ann McDonald of Wyoming County, West Virginia. She was of the McDonalds of Blacksburg, Virginia and vicinity of Revolutionary note. His children were: Lafayette, Josephine, Ida and William A. T.



Another son of Allen Taylor Newberry, Sr., Captain Samuel Newberry, built on the original land grant near the site of the pioneer's home. He called this "Mountain Home," later called "Eagle Oak" as it is today. He was born June 19, 1830, educated in the country school and then went to "Old Massy Creek Academy" Augusta County, Virginia. With a great deal of ability and aspirations to succeed in his studies he also was in contact with a class of young men who were to become leaders in Virginia and the South during the Civil War and Reconstruction days. He enlisted in the Confederate Army as a Lieutenant and was promoted to Captain. He was severely wounded in the shoulder, rendering him unfit for military duty. On coming back home he served as Deputy Sheriff, was elected to the Virginia Legislature in 1866; and in 1874 was elected to the Virginia Senate. In this office he distinguished himself as the leader of "The Big Four of Virginia," known to have opposed Mahone and preserved Virginia as a Democratic state during Reconstruction and since. He is credited with saying, "This way, Freeman" and walking out of the Senate followed by his colleagues — Hale of Grayson County, Lybrook of Patrick County, Williams of Nottoway, which turned the tide against the Mahone element. These four and the then Virginia Lieutenant Governor are honored by a group portrait, painted at State expense and hung in the Capitol in Richmond. Historical highway markers were erected at the home sites of these men, proclaiming them

members of "The Big Four." Captain Newberry ran for Congress but was defeated. At "Eagle Oak" he wrote his published book of poems also named "Eagle Oak" containing many poems of Civil War days and his beloved Bland County and people of Indian times. He was a most outstanding citizen as a representative, senator, soldier, farmer, poet and statesman. His family consisted of his wife, Mary A. (Repass) Newberry, sons Rev. Willie Wisdom Newberry, Edmond L. and one daughter, Clara Beaumont, who died very young.



The Big Four

Another son of Allen Taylor Newberry, Sr. was Rev. Robert L. Newberry, a Methodist minister serving churches in Missouri, Illinois, and southwestern Virginia, where he made his final home and is buried near Mechanicsburg. He married Margaret Hoge Hunter in Missouri, she being of the Hoges of Virginia. One of their children, John A. Newberry, proved to be an inventor, developing a cable splicing device which was used extensively on ships at sea. In his late life he enjoyed big game hunting in Alaska and British Columbia. Once lost in a snow storm he was rescued safely. His fine mounted heads of animals he killed in the north were given to the Bland Community House. His last home was at Huntington, West Virginia.



Of the other sons of Allen Taylor Newberry, Sr., Henry was Captain of Cavalry, captured at Staunton in 1864 and held prisoner at Johnson's Island and Lake Erie until close of war. John was captain in 45th Virginia Infantry, Confederate Army, wounded at Cynthiana, Kentucky and never heard from again by his family. Dunn B. Newberry served through the war in the 45th Virginia Infantry. The daughters married into nearby families and established homes of their own. Elizabeth Caroline married Newton Mustard and one of their children married Judge Martin Williams, who was interested in compiling data on the Newberry family, published by Dr. Goodridge Wilson in his Southwest Corner in the "Roanoke Times".

Continuing in a direct line of descent, the children of Harman Newberry consisted of those mentioned. Lafayette McDonald Newberry spent his life mostly interested in farming. First living near Bland after his marriage to Mary Louise Bird, he later moved to Sharon Springs to oversee that part of his father's estate. Here had been established a college for boarding and day students and in the summer it was used as a summer resort. It was the custom of that day to go to mineral springs in the mountains for health and cool mountain air. Hack loads of visitors drove over from Wytheville and other points. Mr. and Mrs. Newberry's place was a half way point from Tazewell and Burkes Garden to Wytheville. They welcomed people in their home who could not drive the entire distance before dark. Mr. Newberry was treasurer of Bland County in the years 1900 to 1904. He did not seek reelection. From Sharon he moved back to near Bland Court House and built a new home where he spent the rest of his life. His brother William A. T. Newberry lived at their father's home, "Oak Lawn," on down Walkers Creek and he, too, was interested in farming. After their fathers disability and death his estate was jointly administered by the two sons. Both were interested in the work at a small church called Newberry's Chapel and ever ready to be of aid in all that was intended for the up-building of Bland County.

Of the two daughters of Harman Newberry, Ida married W. O. Barns of Tazewell and the other, Josephine, married William Peery of Tazewell.

## HENLEY CHAPMAN NEWBERRY

Henley Chapman (1823-1879) was a great-grandson of Samuel Newberry (of Normandy ancestry), who came to America from Ireland before 1759, and who was the founder of the Newberry family in this country.

Henley Chapman married Mollie Steele August 17, 1859. Born to this union was Minnie Laura (1862-1890), who married Robert Bruce Macon; Edgar Ashby 1865-1891), unmarried; Emily Eunice (1867-1933), married Walter L. Umbarger. Children of this union were Edgar Lee, Mary Letetia, Lizzie Steele, Lucille Newberry, Katheryn Preston, Walter Stuart and Ruth Everett; Albert Lake (1869-1948), married Mary Ella Shannon and had two sons, Albert Warren and Wendell McCarty; Paul Chapman (1871-1930) married Myrtle Ivy Dunbar; Mary Edith (1873-1942), married Wythe Newberry Brown. Children were Chapman Preston, St. Clair Newberry, George Ralph (Park), Harry Lake, and Wythe Macon; Elizabeth May (1876-1952), married John W. Kidd and their three children were Mary Elizabeth, John W. Jr. and James William.

The descendants of Henley Chapman now living in Bland County are Mrs. Guy B. Dunn, Mrs. Ruth St. Clair Dunn, Albert Warren Newberry, Wendell McCarty Newberry (who still lives at the original homestead — see picture) and George Ralph Brown.



## ALBERT LAKE NEWBERRY

Albert Lake had only three hobbies in life—attention to duty and family, a burning desire to see Bland County progress, and a deep interest in politics. He never asked for nor received any appointive or elective position, but spent most of his life working for the party of his choice because of his inherent love of Democracy.

For over a quarter of a century he was a strong advocate of better roads for our section, serving for years as a Director of the Blue Grass Trail Association (Route 42) and the Great Lakes to Florida Highway Association (Routes 21 and 52). He was a farmer, merchant and banker, and served for many years as a member of the Board of Directors and as Chairman of the Board of the Bank of Bland County.

## THE HUDSONS

In the sixth year of the reign of King George I of England, George Hudson, the youngest son of a Yorkshire gentleman, on April 20, 1720 came to Pennsylvania and purchased several hundred acres of land. Another George Hudson, son of Charles Hudson and descendant of the original George Hudson, settled near Staunton, Virginia in 1777. He and his family united with the Presbyterian Church under the ministry of Rev. Archibald Scott. His son, Isaac, with his wife and family moved and settled near Dublin, Virginia. Between 1812 and 1819; George Hudson, son of Isaac, with his Scotch-Irish wife, Hannah Shannon Hudson and her brother, John Shannon and his wife, Jane Hudson Shannon, settled near the village of Ceres, now Bland County, in 1812.

The Shannons settled on about 1700 acres of land known as the Sharon Springs Farm. George Hudson settled on about the same number of acres of land extending from Ceres to the Sharon Springs Farm, then called "Wildland." He built what is now known as the Compton home, which is presently occupied by Hugh Foglesong, and which was built in about 1825. During the Civil War, a large bin was erected in the garret of this house to hide five hundred bushels of grain, which space can be seen today by climbing a ladder from the outside of the house.

In 1827 George Hudson and John Shannon were ordained elders in the Presbyterian Church and assisted in the organization of Sharon Presbyterian Church, the first church in Bland County of this denomination. Deed for this land, upon which the church was built was filed in 1817.

Jane Hudson, daughter of George, married Calvin Hayes. To this union was born George Hayes, who was the grandfather of the present Judge P. C. Kegley and Dr. George B. Kegley of Bland County.

George Thomas, a descendant of the original George Hudson, was killed in the Civil War. He was the grandfather of the W. T. Allen family. George Thomas married Elizabeth Greever and settled on the part of the estate known as "Allendale," and later built the "Aunt Betty Hudson Spangler House" about the year 1850.

Isaac Thomas, son of George Thomas, married Elizabeth Peery, aunt of former Virginia Governor George Peery, and in 1845 built the house now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Bane Crabtree. A brother of Isaac, George Thomas, married Louisa Repass in 1871 and built the W. T. Crabtree house and the old flour mill that is still standing near Ceres.

John Hudson married Florence Repass and lived at her father's old home, built by her father, John Repass, in about 1850. This home today is the ancestral home of Misses Nell and Nita Hudson.

Four generations of the Hudsons have been buried in Sharon Cemetery.

## MOUNTAIN GLEN

Mountain Glen, the ancestral home of Misses Nita and Nell Hudson, is one of the most unique places in Bland County and one of the few homes in Bland County now occupied by members of the same family. This house dates back to sometime between 1850 and 1860 when it was built by John Repass. The house is located off the old Rural Reheat Turnpike some one and one-half miles south of Ceres. It is in its original state except the small front portico which has been changed to a wide long porch and which is used as a summer lounge. The clapboard-weather-boarding has been changed to the conventional





weather-boarding. The original plaster, window facing and sashes are still in good repair. The house has four large outside chimneys and eight fireplaces which were built from brick burned on the estate. The timber for the construction of the house was sawed from the farm supply. The floors upstairs and down are six-inch oak board put together with square nails and polished to a lively dull finish. The wide hall through the center of the entire house has a beautiful stairway with walnut posts and curved railings.

An interesting feature of the house is the stairway leading to an upstairs room and thence to what was originally the father's and mother's bedroom and to the girls' room. It was considered in those days improper for boys and girls to enter their bedrooms from the same stairway. For convenience, the stairway has been closed and a door cut into the upstairs hallway in order that this room could be made accessible from the hall as are the three other rooms. This room is very interestingly furnished in cherry with twin sleigh beds, chest of drawers and dresser that are family heirlooms; a double-wedding ring quilt and hand-drawn pillow shams cover the beds.

The house is completely furnished with heirlooms and furnishings that have been purchased in keeping with the house and times and likes of its occupants. Some of the heirlooms that are prized are: a drop-leaf dining table of cherry, "The First Ride" and "The Watcher" hanging over the stairway, a seven-piece Victorian parlor set upholstered in velvet, and beautiful pieces of china and glass handed down for several generations.

Modern conveniences have been installed throughout the house — electric lighting, an all-electric kitchen with pine paneling, base board electric heat, running water and a modern bathroom. The well-kept interior and beautiful landscaping gives this home an atmosphere of elegance. A large Norway spruce stands on the side of the boxwood hedge and walkway leading to the front entrance. These boxwoods and spruce were planted in 1876 by John Repass who proudly called them his centennial trees. The original wooden spring house has been replaced by a modern, stone building.



This beautiful old home now owned by Hugh Fogle-song is located about one mile east of Ceres on Route 42. It was originally built by George Hudson, who came to Bland County about 1812. At his death in 1865, the house was inherited by his son, Charles John Hudson, who died in 1888, leaving no immediate heirs.

The house was sold first to Henry Davis, who later sold it to Charlie Compton, father of W. K. Compton, our present Sheriff of Bland County.

The house was sold by the Compton heirs in 1949 to the present owner.

The little window in the gable end of the house was the only entrance to a large grain storage bin used to hide grain from the Federal troops during the Civil War.

### MUNSEY FAMILY HISTORY

A. T. Harmon's grandmother was Suzann Eaton. Her father was Crozier Eaton, who married Catherine Munsey. They were married in Ireland and came to America about 1670 or 1700. Holton Munsey was Catherine's brother

and came with them to America. They settled at Big Springs in Giles County, Virginia, near the Wabash Camp Ground which was known as the Irish Settlement.

James H. Munsey, great grandfather of Helen Munsey, was born in the southwest part of Giles County, Virginia, on January 15, 1830. His father was the late Jacob Munsey, farmer of that county and soldier of the War of 1812; his mother, Mary, daughter of Achilles Fanning, was the daughter of a farmer, who lived in what is now Bland County. The parental grandfather of Mr. Munsey was Holton Munsey, who was a farmer of Giles County and was married to Elsie VanPelter of Bedford County, Virginia. Mr. Munsey's wife, whom he married at her birthplace near Point Pleasant, Bland County, was Margaret L. Hutsel, daughter of Joseph C. Hutsel. She was born on January 22, 1842 and they were married on December 2, 1858. Their children are six, born in the order named: Octavia Victoria, now Mrs. Foster Wagner; Harvey J., Joseph W. Patton, James, Robert Ezra, and Elbert Marvin. Mrs. Munsey's father, born in what is now Bland County in 1817, was in service a short time during the late war. His father was Michel Hutsel, an early settle near Point Pleasant. Her mother was Elizabeth C., daughter of Joshua Bruce, who was an early settler here and one of the first M. E. minister's to preach in this vicinity. Before the war, Mr. Munsey was a Lieutenant of Milita. He volunteered at Rocky Gap, Virginia, in April, 1862 and served from that time until the close of the war in Company G., 36th Infantry Regiment. He was wounded by gunshot at Winchester, Virginia, Sept. 19, 1864. He was one of six brothers in service. One of these, W. W. Munsey was severely wounded at Gettysbury; another, John W., died at Richmond in April, 1862, of fever. Ezra F. Hutsel, brother of Mrs. Munsey died a prisoner of war at Camp Morton, Indianapolis, in January, 1864.

## THE DAVIDSONS

One of the principal figures and pioneers in the Davidson Family was John Goolman Davidson, who was killed by the Indians. A son of John Goolman Davidson, Andrew Davidson, married Jennie Burke of Burkes Garden, and it was she who was captured by the Indians near Rocky Gap. A detailed story of this incident has been previously related. Another son of John Goolman Davidson, Joseph





Davidson, married Matilda Patton. A son by this marriage, James C. Davidson, married Julia Brown on August 1, 1822. They purchased 28 acres of land south of Rocky Gap which was patented by John Johnson in 1821, and another 300 A. tract of land patented by James Taylor in 1801. Records further indicate the purchase of several hundred additional acres and patented by W. W. Harman. James C. Davidson built a log house on the south side of the Wilderness Creek and all their children were born there with the exception of John Allen Davidson, who was born December 24, 1835 in a house on the north side of Wilderness Creek near a very fine spring. John A. Davidson sealed and weatherboarded the house which is now occupied by Mrs. Eugene Davidson and her two sons, Jimmie and Mack. Mrs. Davidson has in her possession an old clock, bearing date 1765, which has apple-tree works. John A. Davidson married Mattie Harman on December 24, 1872; they were the parents of seven children as follows: John Henry, James Joseph, Julia Ann, Eugene, William Alexander, Bessie Rose and Grady Doak. William A. Davidson is the only surviving member of this family.

### THE ALLENS

Madison Allen, son of John Allen and Rebecca Poague Allen, was born in Botetourt County Nov. 14, 1808.

As a young man he traveled to Kentucky to visit his sisters and other relatives who had settled there and spent a night in the home of James Bane in Giles County. He



was very much attracted by the young daughter of Mr. Bane and on his return, made it convenient to stop and continue the friendship with Miss Maria Bane. The romance culminated in their marriage on March 6, 1828. Maria returned with him to his home in Botetourt County until 1831 when they moved to Giles. He operated a store where the George Fanning family lived for many years.

His first recorded purchase of real estate was a tan yard from James and Elizabeth Henderson, to which were added tracts of 200 acres, 11 acres and 10 acres, for which he paid \$1150.00.

In 1838 they purchased the land that was to be known as "Oakley." Here he built a brick home in 1840 with brick brought up the James River and Kanawha Canal by flat boat to Buchanan and from there hauled over to the building site. This homeplace was extended to an inclusive survey of 1378 acres.

According to the register of the Virginia General Assembly, he represented Mercer and Giles County in the House of Delegates for the sessions of 1847 and 1848, and after the adoption of the Constitution of 1850, he represented Giles County in the General Assembly for the sessions of 1857 and 1858. In the Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia in 1861, the Act establishing Bland County, he is mentioned in defining the boundaries of the new County: "thence to a point on the top of East River Mountain, two miles east of the present county line between Giles and Tazewell, so as to include the homestead of Madison Allen, and his lands adjoining thereto . . ."

During the War Between the States, much of the currency issued by the Confederacy was signed by M. Allen for the Treasurer.

Early in 1850 Madison Allen and Jeff Higgenbotham organized a group who brought up cattle in Southwest Virginia and drove them in large herds across country to Alexandria, Virginia, where they were shipped to York.

On July 9, 1852, Maria Bane Allen died and Madison Allen was remarried on June 5, 1853, to Emily Susan Carpenter of Rocky Gap in Tazewell County.

In 1853, Madison Allen took an active part in reviving the incorporation of the Walkers Creek and Holstein Turnpike Company by the General Assembly, and completing

the construction through legislation and actual construction.

During the War Between the States, Allen served in the Confederate Capitol, helped in recruiting for the Army in his home territory and gave much time to rallies and organized efforts in the Southwest territory. In May, 1864, a large force of the Northern Army, under brevetted Lieut. Colonel George Crook, camped three days and nights on the upper end of the Allen Farm, killing the stock for food and burning the fences for wood and committing many other depredations. They hanged a man on a tree by the spring and left him hanging there. (This was the spring used by the John Allen family for many years.) This was the outfit known as Crook's Army, a lawless, undisciplined troop which wintered near Princeton and committed depredations throughout Southwest Virginia.

When they broke camp, Mr. Crawford, with a few men, halted this outfit in the bend of the creek at Fannings, causing a delaying action, which helped the Confederates to collect on Cloyd's Mountain for the battle which was fought there on May 9, 1864.

Crawford had deployed his few men to resemble a large body and caused the enemy to stop and form themselves for a formal engagement. When Crawford was recognized by an officer as a hanger-on, who had been bothering them for days, he and his men escaped and carried word to Mrs. Madison Allen and other neighbors that the Yankees were approaching. The home and farm were plundered. What they could not carry off, they destroyed and plundered. They were preparing to burn the home when one of them saw a Masonic apron, and learning that the property belonged to a Mason, persuaded them to abandon the burning of the home and to leave the premises. They traveled further and spent the night at the William Allen home and that family spent the night in the Shannon cemetery. In the ensuing battle on Cloyd's Mountain, many Southwest Virginians lost their lives and the army moved on eastward.

The last appearance of Union soldiers at the Allen Home resulted in the near capture of Madison Allen. As the soldiers came into sight, Madison Allen was on the porch and started on a run for the woods behind the house. His daughter, Harriet, kicked his saddle from the porch through the hall and under a bed. One of the colored boys

caused a diversion so that Mr. Allen escaped into the mountains. Disappointed at his escape they took all of the silver from the silver cabinet, much of which had been made from silver dollars and only recently returned from its hiding place in the mountains.

At his death on June 13, 1872, Mr. J. M. Hoge wrote that in Mr. Allen's death, society lost a public-spirited, energetic, honorable, and valued member, who filled with credit several public offices. He was a man of ardent and tender feelings, liberal to the poor and distressed, and obliging neighbor, a provident and affectionate husband and father, devotedly loved by the large family left to mourn his loss. His social disposition and generous hospitality caused his home to be filled by a large number of habitual and transient visitors and attracted to him a large circle of friends.



Oakley, home of Madison Allen and built by him in 1840 with brick brought up the James River and Kanawha Canal by flat boat to Buchanan and from there hauled over to the building site.

**THE MR. AND MRS. WILL DAVIDSON  
AND MR. AND MRS. WRIGHT THOMPSON HOME**

In the same year that Bland County was formed, William Wilson Compton patented a tract of land consisting of 1200 acres and located on middle Wolf Creek. Mr.

Compton purchased this tract from pioneer Lamperts (Lamberts) and before settling here, he and his wife, Nancy, and children lived on the family acres of Clear Fork Valley which is now a part of the John Kinser estate and which originally was the place of settlement of the pioneer, John Compton, Sr. in 1777. The previous year, he resided in the Bluestone area of Tazewell County but apparently made no permanent residence since he sold the land to his son, John, Jr.

The home of William Wilson Compton and their eight children as it stands today has been remodeled into a type



of southern colonial home, but in its original state in 1800 at which time it was built, it was strictly New England type of board and batten over log with front entrance enhanced by a row of panes of glass over the door and down either side. The kitchen, weaving room etc. were all separate buildings as was the usual case at this time. During the Civil War a brick ell was added from "hand-made brick." Though a modern kitchen and other conveniences have been added, care was exercised to retain the original lines of the house.

The great grandchildren of the present owners, William A. and Nancy Compton Davidson, who frequent the house and explore the farm, are the sixth generation in direct descent from William Wilson Compton. Today the homestead is known as "Willow Brook" and many visitors to the old home place stand in awe at its eloquent splendor.



## REVEREND ADAM QUINN HARMAN

Rev. Adam Quinn Harman was born in Bland County, Virginia near Point Pleasant, on October 22, 1818. He was a minister of the M. E. Church (South) and a farmer. In Wythe County, Virginia, on February 8, 1884, he married Susan Eaton, who was born in Giles County near the Wabash Camp Ground on July 4, 1818. Their children were as follows: Mary Catharine, Arista Gratton, and Orsova Cecil. The father of Mr. Harman was Henry Harman, farmer in Bland County, and son of Adam Harman who was the son of Henry Harman, one of the first settlers and largest landowner in this section of the country. Rev. Mr. Harman's mother was Mary, daughter of Thomas Pauley. His wife's parents, David and Catharine Eaton, were born and married in Ireland. Her father, many years a member of the Masonic Fraternity, lived to be about one hundred years old.

Rev. Harman was a lieutenant of the militia before the war, but not a participant in that strife due to his ministerial duties. His cousin, Thomas B. Harman, was killed at Cloyd's Gap, Virginia, during the Civil War.



Adam Quinn Harman Home, age unknown. L to R. — C. R. Bird, Sarah Bird, Roach Pauley, Mrs. R. L. Tickle, Otto Harman, Ward Harman, Mrs. O. C. Harman, A. T. Harman, O. C. Harman, Susan Harman, Adam Q. Harman, Alex Hamilton.

## THE STOWERS FAMILY

The first Stowers to appear in the United States came from Farham in Suffolk, one of the counties of East Anglia. Farham is on the line from Wickham to Framlingham, on the River Ore. The name Stowers, in all probability, is derived from that of the river. Stow is an Anglian word meaning place and market place. From this word Stow might easily come a word Stowers meaning those who dwell in a market place or come from one.

The only coat-of-arms for a Stowers is recorded as this: a rose, gules, seeded and barbed proper. It would appear that the family, then as now, was a solid, prosperous, unpretentious clan, law abiding and not especially caring about fame or a big place in history.

In 1628, seven years after the founding of Malden, Massachusetts, Nicholas Stowers was one of the first five settlers of Charlestown. It was in 1634 that Nicholas Stowers joined the first seventy-five white persons to own land in Malden, each getting ten acres. The Stowers family in Bland County is descended from a long line of Stowers originating in England, one of the first being Nicholas.

Nicholas' son, Joseph, was born in 1633. He married Mary Blaisdell and this couple also had a son, Joseph, the father of John Stowers who moved to Virginia. John was one of the commonest names among the Stowers.

John Stowers III was born in 1800 and is buried in Stowersville Cemetery, Clearfork, Bland County. It is from this John Stowers that the Bland County Stowers descend.

John III's son, William Hickman, born in 1844 was married to Polly M. Stowers. They had eleven children: Frank, Frazier, William H., Melton, John, Minnie, Annie, Sarah, Ada, Lola, and Lena. William Hickman served in the Civil War with Company F., 45th Virginia Infantry. He sustained a chest wound but recovered.

Sarah married Benjamin F. Starling and to this union was born eleven children: Mose, M———, Ernest, Willie, Mae, Cora, Laura, Mary, Effie, Eula and Jack.

Laura married Leonard Ballard Stowers. Their children are Woodrow, Raymond Flitz and Mildred.

## MUSTARD FAMILY HISTORY

Early in the eighteenth century the Mustards lived in a town called Freedown, in Ireland. It was from the family home in Freedown that the first came to America. The events which led to the first Mustard leaving the land of his birth is an often told tale which has been handed down from one generation to another. However, the legend has been verified by an old Irish lady, a Mrs. Groggin, who was born and grew up in the town of Freedown, Ireland. This lady, now of San Antonio, Texas, related that when she was a girl she often ate apples from the "old Mustard orchard." The lady was brought up by her grandfather, who was an old Irish sea captain. She remembers hearing her grandfather tell the "Tale of the Corpse," it being a story of much interest, since the events took place in their home community. The story goes:

In the area of Freedown, Ireland, about the middle of the eighteenth century, there was much unrest due to religious persecution. There was much friction between the Protestant and Catholic peoples. A Frenchman, who was a Catholic, died in Freedown and a wake was held. The Priest was unable to come until the following day, so the good people of the neighborhood gathered to continue the observance of the wake.

Among those who attended, were three young boys, aged sixteen years, William Mustard, Robert Barns and another, name unknown. These boys, full of mischief, decided to play a trick on the priest. Sometime during the early morning hours the good women of the group went to the kitchen to prepare food for themselves and to have everything in readiness upon the arrival of the priest. The older men had become tired of talking and had gone to sleep, leaving the corpse unattended. The boys found this to be the perfect time to carry out their plan. They took the corpse from the coffin, tied some ropes around it and pulled it up into the large chimney through the fireplace. The ropes were then pulled through the chimney and fastened to a door or window on the outside of the house.

In the morning the priest came, and was in the midst of his prayer when the three pranksters lowered the corpse down from the interior of the soot filled chimney. The sight of the soot covered corpse nearly frightened the poor priest out of his wits, not to mention the others

present. Since it was a serious offense to molest a corpse, the young boys made a speedy departure to America, to safety and freedom.

After some years the two boys, William Mustard and Robert Barns, married sisters, Browns. It was from the wife of William that the peculiarity of the structure of the hands known as "straight fingers" came into the Mustard family and continues even in the seventh generation. To William Mustard and his wife were born two sons, William and James. When the sons were small, the family returned to Ireland on a visit. Upon returning to the United States, the father fell from a gang plank at Norfolk, Virginia and was drowned. The mother and her sons returned to their home in what is now Giles County where the mother died in a short time. While herding cattle in Tazewell County for Mr. Brown, their uncle, one cold winter, the brothers became lost in the woods and William was frozen to death. Thus, there remained only James Mustard from whom descended the many branches of the Mustard family as we know it at present.

We know nothing more of the events in the life of James until his marriage to Sarah Munsey at Mechanicsburg, Virginia on May 4, 1791. The story is told of how the couple was returning from a flax 'scutching' party when they met the minister and asked him to marry them, which he did on the spot in a down pour of rain. To them were born eight children: William, John, Joshua, James, Elisha, Polly, Julia and Sally. Three of the sons married Patterson sisters, who were the daughters of Issac and Agnes (Patton) Patterson, a prominent family of the Cove section of Wythe County.

William, who married Annah Patterson, was the father of Sarah, Nancy, Matilda, Joseph, J. Thomas, Harvey R., Wesley Newton, William Gratton, J. Jasper and Samuel P. All of his sons, except Joseph, who died young, served in the Confederate Army. William was reportedly the first manufacturer of gun powder in the area. The shop stood on the farm now owned by Mrs. Hiram Stowers at Mechanicsburg, Virginia. William Gratton was the first Bland County surveyor.

John, who married Vicie Patterson, was the father of James Harvey, William P., Josh, Elisha, Elizabeth, Buddie, Mary, Tommy, Jane, Allen, Anne, and Henry. He was one of the six commissioners appointed upon the formation of



the county to lay off the county into four magisterial districts. Three of his sons are known to have served in the Confederate Army.

The name of Mustard is common throughout much of the United States and parts of Canada. All are thought to be descended from the young Irish immigrant, William, who left his native land rather suddenly, as a result of a boyish prank.

### **JAMES WAYNE GRAYSON AND EMILY STEEL GRAYSON**

The Grayson family is of Scotch origin, settling in Westmoreland County, Virginia. The ancestor of the Bland County Graysons, John and wife, Barbara, moved from Culpeper, Virginia to Montgomery County around 1766. William, son of John, married Rachel Cooley and upon his death in 1801, willed his sons, Ambrose and John, the plantation adjoining that on which they then resided in Wythe County, now Bland. Ambrose settled on the 'Cold Patrick Place' around 1795. He married Elizabeth Wysor and to them were born four children: Randolph, who married Cynthia Grayson; Henry, a bachelor; James Wayne; and Polly, who married John Grayson of Grayson Town.

James Wayne Grayson and his wife, Emily Steel, in the year 1862 gave the County of Bland the lands for the big spring, the court house and buildings, "for the further consideration of their desire to aid the county of Bland in the creation of its public buildings and lessening the burdens upon the people in the cost of said improvements" (Deed Book No. 1, page 61). Streets and alleys were laid off in another deed. The old store house, formerly occupied by John C. Shannon and owned by James Wayne, was used by the county as a court house until the erection of the building that was destroyed by fire. James Wayne was commissioned a Captain and Lt. Colonel in the Virginia Militia, served as a home guard member in the War Between the States training troops until his death March 23, 1864, age thirty-eight years. Emily Steel was born November 21, 1830 and died February 23, 1865 leaving three children who were cared for by her sisters, Mrs. H. C. (Mollie) Newberry and Mrs. G. W. K. (Elizabeth) Green.

Emily's and James Wayne's children were William Wayne who was county surveyor, Mary A. who married W. F. McColgan, and James Floyd who married Lucy Anne McNutt, daughter of Elizabeth (Brabson) and John S. McNutt.

Emliy Steel Grayson was the daughter of Crockett and Polly (Bogle) Steel. Crockett was the son of Robert (Robin) Steel who had several land surveys recorded in what is now Bland County at Montgomery Court House in 1782, one of them lying on Walkers Creek called "Green Hill." Robin married first Polly Keeling and the sons of his first wife moved to Kentucky, one of them, Samuel Steel married Jerusha Powers, of Bland County. They had a number of children, one of whom was Rev. Reuben Steel, of the Methodist Church, who was born in Bland County, lived in Kentucky and returned to Bland to marry Elizabeth Newberry, daughter of Rev. Samuel Newberry, and making his home then in Russell County. Robin Steel married Rebecca Oury, daughter of Van Oury whose ancestors came from Greensburg, Pennsylvania, as his second wife and they were the ancestors of the Steels living in the county today. George married Emma Robinnett and second Vicie Waddle, Catherine married Thomas Dunn, Robert married Rhoda Repass, Reuben married Clarissa Peery, David married Martha Peery, Nancy married James Waddle, John married a Simmerman and Oury married Elizabeth Cooke.

The house in which Robin Steel lived in his later years was near the site of the present home of Wendell Newberry. Part of this house was built by Crockett Steel, son of Robin, in about 1850.

## THE CRABTREES

John Crabtree, progenitor of the Crabtree generation now living in the west end of Bland County, was of English descent. He owned a large tract of land in the vicinity of Saltville, Va. Later he sold this land, retaining a mineral right. He bought another farm in the Poor Valley section of Tazewell County. After living there for some time, he moved into the west end of what is now Bland County. Here, in 1840, he purchased a farm of 350 acres in the heart of Rich Valley. At that time this land was in Wythe County, where the deed is recorded.

Here a nine-room brick house was built from hand-made brick of clay from the farm. This was the first brick house in this section. It is now owned and occupied by his grandson, B. M. Crabtree. This is the farm on which the Indian massacre of the Sluss family occurred many years ago.

John Crabtree was born April 19, 1799, and was married November 5, 1829. His wife, Mary Umbarger, of Wytheville, was born March 20, 1808. To this union were born five sons: James, Reese, Leonard W., Abraham U., and John Henry; and also three daughters: Elizabeth, Liza and Margaret.

### CRABTREE HOME

One of the most picturesque, and probably one of the first brick homes in Bland County, is the Crabtree home, now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Basil Crabtree about one mile west of Ceres on Route 42.



This house is located only a few hundred feet west of the original site of the Sluss home where the Indian massacre took place.

A house of hand made brick was constructed around 1840 on land purchased by Mr. Crabtree's grandfather. This house still remains in the hands of the Crabtrees.

### THE McNEIL FAMILY

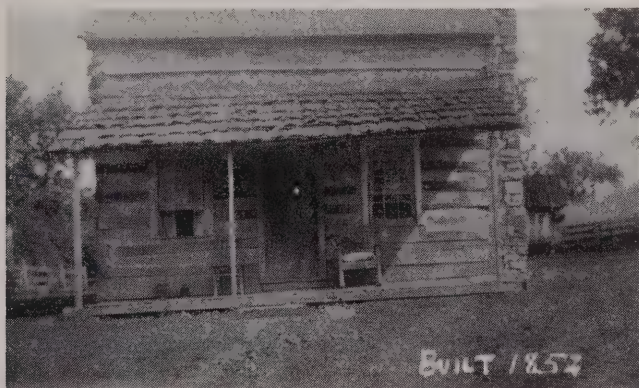
Jacob McNeil, Sr. was born near Harper's Ferry in 1759 and moved to Greenbrier County, later Pocahontas County, Virginia, in 1768. He served in the Revolutionary War and was one of the guards at Fort Randolph in 1777

when the celebrated Indian Chief, Cornstalk, his son and another Indian or two were killed by enraged colonists. Fort Randolph was located at Point Pleasant, West Virginia. After the war he married Annie Stevens, and in order to get his wife away from the Indians, he moved to Franklin County, Virginia. He was the father of nine children. After his wife's death in 1800, he remarried Peggy Cool and to this union five children were born.

One of Jacob McNeil's sons was Daniel McNeil, who was born about 1791. He was married to Elizabeth Kennett, daughter of Peter Kennett and Milly Blankenship. Daniel McNeil bought land from his father on Blackwater River in Franklin County and lived there until the early 1830's when he moved to Floyd County. He and Elizabeth Kennett had nine children, four boys and five girls. Apparently, after the mother's death, the family was separated in 1847. Daniel McNeil had a sister, Annie McNeil, who married Charles Miller, Sr. of Giles County (later Bland Co.), and came to live with his sister and brother-in-law. He worked as a carpenter for the Wessendoncks and continued here for ten years. From there he moved to Mechanicsburg and went into business with J. P. Roach in the mercantile business. He sold out his interest there and moved to Bland Court House and lived there for several years. From Bland they moved to a farm three miles below Mechanicsburg.

### THE FRENCHES

The Frenches of Bland County are of Scotch-Irish descent. Gordon French, descendant of Matthew French





of Wolf Creek, was killed during the Civil War at Winchester and buried there. John C. French was a son of Gordon French. He was born April 20, 1849 at Nobusiness, Virginia. He married Dolly McNeil, who was a school teacher in Bland County for a number of years. John C. French was known among his friends for his Irish wit and humor. When he was twelve years old, during the Civil War, he and his brother, Gaston, were taking some corn to mill to have it ground. They met some Yankee soldiers who attempted to take their corn, wagon and horses. When the soldiers' commanding officer approached, he "put them to shame" for mistreating innocent children. John C. French died January 6, 1932.

### THE STAFFORDS

The Staffords came from Ireland to Virginia in colonial times. Ralph A. Stafford, grandfather of the late John R. and William H., was born and spent all his life in the old Walkers Creek Community in Bland County. He was a soldier in the War of 1812. Ralph M. Stafford, son of Ralph A. and father of the late John R. and William H., was born at Walkers Creek in 1833 and spent all his long life of ninety years in the same community. Ralph A. Stafford volunteered as a Confederate soldier and went through the war as a member of the Eighth Virginia Cavalry. He was captured at Abbs Valley, Tazewell County, and from there was taken as prisoner to Columbus, Ohio and held for eight months, or until hostilities ceased.

### THE COLONEL JOHN COMPTON HOME AT HOLLY BROOK

The original brick house was built by Colonel John Compton in 1852. The front of the house was two story, four rooms and a fire place in each room. The porch extended across the front door and a curious star was painted on the ceiling. At the rear was a dining room and a story and half kitchen. The slaves used the half over the kitchen. The brick was burned on the place on the upper end of the meadow near Kimberling Creek. Mr. William H. Hoge and Timothy E. Mitchell purchased this farm in 1890 and in 1910 Mr. C. A. Mitchell bought Mr. Hoge's



**COLONEL JOHN COMPTON HOME**

part. The house has a basement and the lumber used in the framing was hand hewn. During the War Between the States, the owners hid their guns and other valuables in the huge fireplaces. The home, overlooking a beautiful meadow, lies on the waters of Kimberling Creek in the Holly Brook section of Bland County. Dismal Falls, a favorite recreation spot for the young people of that region, lies just above the home on Dismal Creek.

The home has been remodeled and is now in the possession of Mrs. Lula Mitchell Blankenship.

The Colonel Compton home at Holly Brook was known as Gap View Farm at the time it was owned by George Harman and his wife, Barbara Lopp. Their daughter, Betsy, who married Ephraim Dunbar, lived here until his death. Betsy then married Lewis Neel.

### **THE W. J. BRUCE HOME**

Daniel Hornbarger and family came to what is now Bland County in about the year 1853, and built a log house up the hill from where the Wallace Bruce home now stands in Bastian. Later this house was torn down and another log house built which still stands back of Mr. Bruce's home. It consists of two rooms downstairs and one upstairs.

What is now the Wallace Bruce home once belonged to his father, Mr. Johnson Bruce. It is a large, twelve room frame house consisting of a reception hall, library, five bedrooms, bath, three closets, kitchen and pantry.



There are three fireplaces with mirrored mantels. This house is unique in that the entire downstairs can be thrown together by opening sliding doors between the three front rooms. While the house once boasted carbide lights, it now has all the modern conveniences, central heating, water and electricity.

It has been the custom of the Bruces for the entire group of sons and daughters and their families to gather at the old home place on Sunday afternoons to enjoy family fellowship and such recreation as reading books aloud and singing their favorite hymns.

### THE BANE HOME

The home now owned by William C. and Ethel Bane, located on the road about two miles south from Crandon, Virginia, was erected in 1857, according to a date on the east chimney, by a Colonel Jack Crockett, who married Sallie Crump of Crump's Bottom. The house, a white frame structure, consisting of seven large rooms, each with a fire place, faces Big Walkers Mountain; and Big Walkers Creek runs at the back, about one fourth mile from the house. Each room has a fire place and the front stairway is of sufficient size to have allowed one of the owners to ride a mule up it (Mr. Dunn Newberry).

Mr. Allen Taylor Newberry purchased the land and old house from Colonel Crockett and gave the home to his son, Dunn Newberry. The lower, or east end of the farm, was given to another son, Robert Newberry and the west end was given to Thomas Newberry. Mr. Shep C. Chumbley, of Pulaski County, Virginia, purchased the Dunn



Newberry Tract in 1895 and a few years later the Thomas Newberry Tract. Charles M. Bane, who married Mary, the daughter of Shep C. and Lucy (Hoge) Chumbley, purchased the old house from his father-in-law and he and Mrs. Bane lived here sixty-two years, having been married in the large parlor on October 9, 1895.

### THE J. M. SCOTT HOME

In 1859 Captain Jimmie Stowers built a large log cabin consisting of one room upstairs and one downstairs with provisions for partitioning it into different sized rooms to suit the needs of the family. Later Mr. Stowers' sister-in-law, Susie Cregar, came to live with them and the same type of structure was built for her use on a smaller scale adjoining the larger house.

Mrs. J. M. Scott and her family now live in the home, which they call the double log house. The hand-hewn log dwelling is well preserved and the wooden pegged windows and doors, wide pine floors and ceiling and large rock fireplaces stand in their original state. For convenience and comfort, a kitchen, dining room, bath and enclosed back porch of modern structure have been added.

The home is furnished mostly in modern furniture, however, the Scott family proudly possesses many fine family heirlooms including a corner cupboard, three blanket chests, three pie safes and a Seth Thomas clock with wooden works.





Five generations of the Stowers family have lived at this home place: first, Captain Jimmie Stowers and his wife, Dicy Creggar; second, Mrs. Mary Stowers Scott, and third, her son, John F. Scott. All of John M. Scott's children represent the fourth generation and his granddaughter, Lorraine Dunn, is of the fifth generation living here.

### **MORGAN HOUSE**

The property known as the "Morgan House" stands on a hill side on route 42 below Mechanicsburg, Virginia. The house, built of brick, was built by G. H. Morgan and his wife, a Miss Dennis, about the time of the War Between the States. Mr. Morgan originally came from Canada and lived here until his death in about 1904. They did not have any children, so at his death, the firm of Burton and Songer of Mechanicsburg, came into possession of this property. Mr. John Allen purchased the property from them after World War I. Albert and Jane (Allen) Stafford now own the property which is unoccupied.

### **THE WESSENDONCK HOUSE** (Cluxi)

An interesting dwelling in Bland County is known as the Wessendonck House, located on the banks of Nobusiness Creek near Holly Brook.

The original owners were not of an old Bland County family, but having come to the county in the early 1850's from Germany, much mystery and interest surrounded this family and the house they built.

The house was a two-story, seven-room frame structure. Two rooms upstairs were entered by a winding stairway located in a vestibule leading off an outside porch. Unusual features of the house were the marble mantel piece, marble window sills and a glassed-in room. The kitchen and storage rooms were housed in a log building back of the main dwelling. Evidences of a charcoal burning stove still remain in the dilapidated building.

The interior of the house was beautifully done with plastered walls and the very best wallpaper with draperies to match. Some of the furnishings are in use now in homes of the descendants of Mrs. Wessendonck. Some of the prized pieces include a Victorian love seat, a whatnot, six parlor chairs and an unusual walnut buffet.

"Cluxi" was the name given this home by the family. This name was selected by drawing letters of the alphabet out of a hat until a readable name was composed.

The home was passed on to Otto Nidermaier, who sold it to William Edward Blankenship in 1889. John W. Burton bought this property and later sold it to Arland D. Burton in 1928, who later sold the property to the present owner, Lake D. Morehead. The house has long been discarded as a dwelling and is used for storage of hay.

## THE RAYMOND REPASS HOUSE

A landmark in the town of Bland is the house known as the Raymond Repass property. The original dwelling was built by William Bird in about 1848. The property was later purchased by John Crowe Shannon and his wife, Mary (Grayson) Shannon.

Entries taken from an account book of John C. Shannon's store read: "December 23, 1859, Paid to Wm. Walters, By Work on My House, \$58.55," and another, "Paid to J. F. Lock, By Your Work On My House, \$366.70." It is assumed that these amounts were paid for repairs or additions to the original building. A date on the chimney of the house is 1859. This date could have represented the



time the house was renovated. The house was a two-story frame in an ell shape, part log and located on a corner where the Raleigh and Grayson and Walker and Holston Turnpikes crossed. Large columns supported the double front porch which faced a large tree-filled lawn.

The Shannon house was used at various times for a Clerk's office, and a store and in one room was set up an emergency hospital for soldiers from the Battle of "Queen's Cove" during the Civil War.

The property on which the house now stands was sold in succession to Charles Grayson in February, 1879, William Bird in April, 1879, Martin Williams in 1903 and to Raymond Repass in 1904. The house remained in the Repass family until 1959, when Robert G. Newberry purchased the residence and converted it to Newberry's Funeral Home, which is Bland County's only funeral home. The lawn is terraced and resplendent with beautiful trees, shrubs and flowers, many of which Mrs. Repass and her family started during their residency there.

### THE JOHN KINSER HOME

This house was built for Dr. William Bishop over ninety years ago. The four front rooms of the present house are from the original structure. Dr. Bishop rebuilt the house once, adding ten rooms to the original four that were still standing.

The home had eight fireplaces and a front and back stairway. The rooms in the back upstairs were used for a classroom for the children and a room in which their teacher lived.

Both Dr. William Bishop and his son, Dr. Jim Bishop, had their offices in their home. The Bishop families lived here for about fifty years.

The Kinser family has occupied this dwelling for forty-six years, moving to Bland County from Tazewell County. The house has been remodeled since they moved there.

### THE MOREHEAD FAMILY

The family of Muirhead settled in the northern neck of Virginia in the middle of the seventeen hundreds. The descendants of Bland County are known as Morehead and they descend from James Muirhead, son of Andrew Muirhead, born in 1788, and Mary Miller, born in 1796, daughter of Daniel Miller, who made their home at Newbern, Pulaski County. From early marriages recorded in the Montgomery County Court House, the Muirhead family then, as now, have married into the Miller family so many times that perhaps it could be said that they are more Millers than Muirheads.

Two sons of James Muirhead and a cousin, William Miller, came to the Kimberling Valley of Bland County with a hunting party and the Muirheads found the section to their liking, so they bought land and settled there in about 1850. These brothers, Daniel F. and Andrew A. (Aussie) Muirhead, became the progenitors of the family in the county today. Aussie married Elizabeth Miller and they made their home at Holly Brook at the home where Mr. Grover Wright now lives. Their children were Emma, who married Will Rice Miller, a Methodist preacher and son of Dr. L. J. Miller, and Henrietta who never married. Daniel F. Muirhead, born September 13, 1817 and died September 11, 1899, married Elizabeth Saunders, who was born May 23, 1827 and died December 11, 1881. William Miller went to Wise County and became the ancestor of Mrs. O. G. (Ella Miller) Morehead.



Daniel Muirhead settled in front of Shiloh Church and then moved to the land above. He is said to have been the first of the family to use the spelling Morehead and Montgomery County records show that the new spelling was used in 1855. The original home place is now owned by Mr. Gilbert Gordon Morehead. Daniel served in the Confederate Army. His children were: Leonard F. Morehead, who married Emma Robinett, daughter of Zezreel and Mary (Ward) Robinett; Lee Kyle Morehead, who married Emmarilia C. Miller, daughter of Abraham and Elsie (Munsey-Wagner) Miller; Marshall Morehead, who married Sally Shufflebarger, daughter of Newton and Rebecca (Wygol) Shufflebarger, and second to Kate Helvey, daughter of Billy and Lizzie (Wheeler) Helvey; Baxter Morehead, who married Mary Miller of Christiansburg, Virginia, and second to Ida Kanode, daughter of William and Lizzie Kanode of Blacksburg, Virginia; Elizabeth Morehead, who married John French of Wolf Creek; Fannie, who married Martin Rosenbaum of Cripple Creek; Price Morehead, who married Nannie McClarrity of Princeton, West Virginia; James Morehead, who married Jane Shrader, daughter of John and Christine (Day) Shrader; Martha Morehead, who married David O. Wright of Nobusiness; Sarah, who married James David Wright of Rock, West Virginia; Gordon Morehead, who married Mary Isobelle Miller, daughter of Dr. J. L. Miller, and second to Tacy Adeline Pruett, daughter of Milton and Elizabeth (Fanning) Pruett.

## BIRD FAMILY

The Bird name originated in France and was first spelled "Le Brid." As some of the family migrated into England, the spelling of the name was changed to "Bird." In later years some of this same family line changed the spelling of the name to "Byrd."

The earliest Bird settlers in the United States came into Massachusetts and Virginia. Records show that the first Birds in Virginia settled in Pittsylvania County around 1790. The first Bird settlement in Bland County was 1848. The old Repass dwelling which is now the Bland Funeral Home was built by William Bird who was a first cousin of John Bird, grandfather of the late George T. Bird.

John Bird was born 1784 in Franklin County, Virginia, and was married to Elizabeth Brown of the same county, from which marriage eleven children were born, the youngest being Benjamin Valentine.

Benjamin Valentine Bird was born in Franklin County on Valentine Day — February 14, 1814 (thus the name) and married Catherine Cole Saunders, native of Bedford County. Later this family moved to Mercer County, West Virginia and from there to Bland County. There were also eleven children in this family, most of whom were born in Bland County, George Thomas being the youngest.

George Thomas Bird was born October 9, 1865 in Bland County and married Carrie Louise Burton also a native of Bland County. From this marriage, eleven — a number apparently becoming a tradition with this line of Birds — children were born, all of whom are still living in Bland and Southwest Virginia counties. George T. Bird, after the death of his first wife, was married a second time to Myrtle Dunbar Newberry, widow of the late Paul Newberry of Bland who is still living and residing at her home in the town of Bland. George Thomas Bird died August 12, 1945.

### THE D. WOODROW BIRD RESIDENCE

Reflecting the eloquence and grandeur of its time, and one of the most stately homes in Bland, is the residence of Mr. and Mrs. D. Woodrow Bird. Constructed by Valentine Bird in 1866, this home was the residence of the late



George T. Bird, who in 1912 added three rooms to the original brick structure. In 1954 the house was completely renovated by D. Woodrow Bird and today is one of the most modern homes in Bland County.

### **MRS. J. S. ASHWORTH'S RESIDENCE**

One of the earlier homes in the town of Bland and located on Lee Street, is the residence of Mrs. J. S. Ashworth. The date of construction and by whom is not known.

As verified by Court records, Randolph and Cynthia Grayson purchased the property in 1857 and resided there until 1867, at which time the said property was sold to Fred F. Repass. In 1892 the property was conveyed to Frank and Grey Updyke Suiter and remained in this estate until 1894 when it became the Presbyterian Manse and purchased by William W. Grayson, N. B. Studebaker and George T. Studebaker; the latter being a former teacher in Bland. In 1920, Harve G. and Rosa Lee Grayson Newberry acquired the property and in 1925 it was obtained by Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Ashworth and has remained in this ownership for the past thirty-five years.

In its original state this house consisted of a two-room log structure with a large fireplace. Under the ownership of Mr. and Mrs. Ashworth, the house has been completely renovated and in its present state is a modern up-to-date residence.

### **THE TICKLE FAMILY**

The first of the Tickle family to settle in what is now Bland County was Daniel Lineberry Tickle, who came from Winston Salem, N. C. in 1845 and worked on the farm of George Bogle, which is now the homestead owned by Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Tickle. About a year later, 1846, the father and mother of Daniel Lineberry Tickle, Daniel and Sarah Lineberry Tickle, emigrated from North Carolina and settled at the Bruce place, which later became the Bob Penley farm and in later years the Donald and Edith Helvey farm on Crackers Neck.

Daniel Lineberry Tickle married the daughter of George Bogle, who was named Polly, and to this union was born the following children: Ira Lozier, Edna Nye, Meek Bogle, Lottie Virginia and Robert Lineberry Tickle.

Hezzaki, Peter and Bennett were brothers of Daniel Lineberry; one sister, Adeline, resided in Bland while two other sisters married and remained in North Carolina. Adeline Tickle married Dave Kitts. The Tickles were and remain Methodists.

## THE HORNBERGERS

Parker Hornbarger inherited from his father, Daniel, in about 1853, two-hundred acres of land on Hunting Camp Creek in Bland County.

It is not known whether or not Daniel came to Bastian before Parker was born or whether Parker came to Bastian later and settled there. It is an established fact, however, that Bastian was once called Parkersburg in honor of Parker Hornbarger.

The cabin in which Parker Hornbarger lived still remains intact on the site of the W. J. Bruce home. On this farm is a spring that has never been known to run dry in these many years since the Hornbarger family used it as a source of water supply.

In the Hornbarger family cemetery among the markers may be seen one which reads: William P. Hornbarger, Company C, 54th Virginia Infantry, CSA (no dates of birth or death). However, records show that Mr. Hornbarger sold the homeplace to W. J. Bruce in 1912 and died shortly thereafter at his daughter's home, Mrs. Betty Leffle of Shawver's Mill, Virginia.

## THE SALLIE HONAKER HOME

The exact date of the building of the Sallie Honaker home, located on Wolfe Creek near Rocky Gap, is not known. However, records show that in 1856 the property was deeded to John D. Peery by Hiram Sarver.





John C. Crockett and wife, Sallie, and William B. Crump and wife, Eliza, deeded the home to Peter C. Honaker in 1873 and James Davidson Honaker inherited it in 1876.

Sallie J. and J. C. Honaker bought the house in 1920 and since 1953 it had been owned and occupied by heirs of Mr. and Mrs. Honaker: sons, J. E. Honaker and wife, and John Bogle Honaker; daughters, Eloise and Mary.

The dwelling originally had a double front porch supported by columns and was of white frame construction. It has been remodeled and now has a single front porch and is surrounded by a large lawn and trees.

### THE POWERS FAMILY

Little is known directly of the Powers family in Bland County except they were of Polish descent and of moderate financial means. They came to Southwest Virginia from Vermont, probably about the middle of the 18th century. They settled on Walkers Creek at Mechanicsburg in what is now Bland County, then known as the John Grayson farm.

According to reliable sources, the Powers family of Southwest Virginia descended from Jacob and Edith Adams Powers and was closely related to the President Adams family.

Jonas Powers had at least three sons, Oliver, Jonas Harman, and Reuben. Also three daughters, Eunice, Esther and Jerusha. Eunice married Samuel Newberry about 1795. Esther married Robert Newberry, Nov. 20, 1803. The latter marriage is recorded in the Wythe County Clerk's Office, Wytheville, Va. Samuel and Robert Newberry were sons of the Samuel Newberry, who came from Ireland about the middle of the 18th century and founded the Newberry family in America. Jerusha Powers married Samuel Steele, father of Reuben Steele, who was the father of Rev. Samuel Steele, a minister of the Methodist Holston Conference.

Oliver and Jonas Harman Powers moved to Wise and Scott Counties along with some of the Newberry families. Their offspring are numerous in those counties.

Reuben Powers is thought to be the direct ancestor of the Powers families now living in Bland County. Records show that in the Eastern District of Tazewell County, now a part of Bland, there lived Oliver, James and John Powers. John was chosen constable in that District in 1803, 1805, 1810. He also bought land there in 1800.

The John Powers, who was the grandfather of the Powers family line in Bland County in and near Mechanicsburg, was born shortly after the beginning of the 19th century, and died in the early 1890's.

This John, better known as "Pike," was a teacher in the early schools of his community for many years. One of the schools he served stood near Walkers Creek on land now owned by Edward Melvin. He also taught in the Little Creek section. He was a noted mathematician and though, probably, self-taught, was well educated for his day. He also served as constable for his community.

He was married to Julia Bruce and reared a large family of ten children.

His offspring include the Thomas Umbarger family of Ceres; the late Jim Ward Stafford family of Giles County; the late Robert Powers family of Gaithersburg, Maryland. Also the Crow Powers family, the Gordon families, the late John Bernard family, and John Quincy Adams Powers, all of the Mechanicsburg Community.

Note: Much of the foregoing information was secured from the research made by James Taylor Adams, genealog-

ist, of Big Laurel, Va., and from the history of the Newberry family as compiled by the late John Newberry, Huntington, West Va.

### ALLEN TAYLOR NEWBERRY HOME

A Mr. Bland built this house in 1866 for Allen Taylor Newberry I. It was a frame structure, planked up and down and stripped over the cracks, and consisted of six rooms.

In 1912, Allen Taylor II and Harvey G. Newberry weather-boarded the house and added two rooms over the kitchen and dining room, making it a two-story, eight room dwelling with three porches.



Mr. and Mrs. Allen T. Newberry II, Mr. and Mrs. Allen T. Newberry III, and their children are now living in the home, making the fourth generation who has occupied this home place.

### THE UPDYKES

The Updyke ancestry is traced back to the low lands of Holland. The name Updyke is derived from the place where they lived, "Up-The-Dyke." Because of religious struggles in Holland, two of Updykes left Holland and

settled in England in about 1636. In 1638, Gysbut Updyke emigrated to New Amsterdam, New York. His descendants settled mostly in Rhode Island and New Jersey. One son, John Updyke moved to Virginia and founded the family by that name in the South. Two sons of John Updyke, Rufus and Albert, removed further west and settled in a Quaker village in Virginia. Albert Gallatin Updyke, son of Albert Updyke, was born February 11, 1820. His parents died soon after his birth and he was reared by an old Quaker woman. Upon reaching manhood, Albert Gallatin Updyke located in Loudoun County where he became engaged in the mercantile business and continued there until 1847 and at which time he married Mary Agnes Smith, daughter of Congressman Ballard Smith, of Lewisburg, West Virginia.

As the story has been told, Albert G. Updyke was an adventurous man and he desired a place to settle down and call his own. One day he hitched his horse to his new buggy and set out to locate this place saying to himself: "Where this horse leads me I shall remain." The horse, so it is told, stopped in front of Seddon Hotel, Virginia, now Bland. There he spent the night and was told of a farm or tract of land located on Walkers Creek. He immediately went to investigate and on October 1, 1856 he purchased from Moses and Elizabeth Hunter a tract of land consisting of 600 acres located on Walkers Creek and located south of Mechanicsburg. Located on this tract of land was a log dwelling with slave quarters. On moving his wife, Mary Agnes Smith to Bland, many wagons were used to provide all the comfort possible since she was accustomed to luxury and the only daughter of a wealthy family. Along with her she brought furniture, quilts, feather beds, pillows and a dress for every occasion. Her devoted slave, Jimmie Clems, was personally assigned to care for and provide the comforts of life insofar as possible. He was a respected slave and faithfully performed his duties as assigned.

To this union, Albert Gallatin Updyke and Mary Agnes Smith, five girls and three boys were born. For such a large family a larger house was necessary and in 1880 the clay was taken from a near-by field and from this clay the present brick house was built which is now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Wagner who represent the fourth generation of the descendants of Albert G. Updyke. \*



During the Civil War, "Major" Updyke, as he was called, was assigned to the Home Guards. He was a sincere, faithful and life-long member of the Crandon Presbyterian Church. For many years he served as a Sunday School teacher, superintendent, elder, deacon and often filled the pulpit in the minister's absence.



\* A few of the many descendants of Mr. Updyke, living now, are: a son, Frank Updyke, a daughter, Mrs. Gertrude Munsey, both of Mechanicsburg, Virginia, and a daughter, Mrs. Ida Newberry, Huntington, W. Va.

### EARLY SETTLERS OF DRY FORK

In 1880, the families of Wesley Wagner, Jim Wood and Andy Showalter came to Dry Fork from Pulaski County. So far as is known they were the first Negro settlers in that valley. In 1887, three more families came from Franklin County. They were M. H. Ferguson, A. J. Tynes and Henry Gray.

Mr. and Mrs. Reuben Ferguson are among the older citizens in Dry Fork now. Mrs. Ferguson taught the first school there in 1906-1907. She is the daughter of a slave and relates many interesting events of her life. She was responsible for the present mail route, going up and down the valley securing signatures on a petition to the Post Office Department. She was able to secure eighty-two signatures but the department demanded one-hundred, so



Mrs. Ferguson had to wait for the population to increase and reach one-hundred. The goal was finally reached!

Mrs. Ferguson was also instrumental in seeing that the road to Dry Fork was improved. She wrote to the resident engineer of the Highway Department asking for a better road, to which he responded favorably.

As time passed other names became familiar in the community such as Hawthorne, Robinson, Charlton, Jones, Gore, Toler, Sanders, Wilson, Davidson and Shields.

## THE HARMAN HISTORY

Heinrich Adam Harman, Hermann, was among the early Harmans who emigrated from Germany early in the eighteenth century. He was born in Germany in about 1700, married Louisa Katrina October 8, 1723 and came with his family to Pennsylvania about 1726. To them was born eleven children: Adam, who resided in North Carolina and was a member of the party which aided in founding Harman Station in Kentucky; Henry, Sr.; George, who died in 1749; Daniel, who settled in Tazewell County in 1773; Mathias; Christina, who married Jeremiah Pate of Giles County; Catherine, who married Ulrich Richards of North Carolina; Philipina, who died in 1751; Valentine, who settled in Tazewell County in 1771 and moved to Kentucky; a daughter who married a Looney, and Jacob who settled in Tazewell County and later moved away.

Heinrich Adam Harman, as shown by report of surveyors, Patton and Buchanan, lived on the New River three years before the Ingles, Drapers and others came to that territory, thus the honor and distinction of having erected the first dwelling and making the first permanent settlement of English speaking people in the Mississippi Valley goes to him. The early Harmans were, presumably, Lutheran and associated themselves with the Moravian Settlement in North Carolina and many of their records can be found there. The great majority of the Harmans of Southwest Virginia became Methodist and have remained Methodists to the present. Heinrich Adams figured prominently in the rescue of Mrs. Mary Draper Ingles, was qualified as 'Captain Troops of Horse' in 1752, was constable of New River and overseer of the road. As a pioneer he was first among those who sought a home in this wilderness for himself and his family, and with his distinguished sons blazed a way for his descendants and others to enjoy the comforts and embellishments of civilized life in this country. He died on New River in 1767.

Henry, Sr., second son of Heinrich Adam, was born in 1726, probably on the Isle of Man, when his father and family were en route to America. In about 1758 he married Anna (Nancy) Wilburn of North Carolina. He owned lands in Tazewell and other counties in Southwest Virginia as early as 1754, and moved to one of these tracts, probably the large estate near High Rock, now Bland County, in 1775, moving to Holly Brook in 1790. He and other Harmans, able to bear arms, served on the frontiers of Virginia until the close of the Revolutionary War, and they continued for several years thereafter in defending the Virginia frontiers from Indian depredations. He was appointed Captain of the 'King's Militia' around 1756 by King George, and took a prominent part in the Indian Battles of Little River, Tug River, capture of Jennie Wiley, Indian Raids on Burkes Garden and was known by the Indians as "Old Skygusta." His children were: Daniel, who settled in Tazewell County, married Pheby Davidson and was killed by the Indians in 1791; Henry, Jr. settled in Tazewell County and married Christina Harman; Adam; George; Mathias, who lived in Smyth County and married Mary Dunn; Hezekiah, who lived in Tazewell County and married Polly Brown; Elias; Rhoda, who married William Neel in 1794, and Louisa who married James Davis in 1799. After a busy life of about

forty years in Tazewell, Giles, and Bland Counties, he died at Holly Brook at about 95 years and is buried there.

Mathias, fifth son of Heinrich Adam, led a party in 1755 which located and constructed a log cabin on Louisa River, which later became known as "Harman Station." This was the foundation of the first permanent English speaking settlement made in Eastern Kentucky. In 1774 he was called "Captain Mathias Harman of Ingles Ferry." In 1787, Mathias Harman and Thomas Wiley owned and resided upon adjoining farms on Walker's Creek, in present Bland County. Upon the capture of Jennie Wiley, Mathias led a party of ten who pursued the Indians. The Indians believed him in league with the devil because of their number he killed, his miraculous escapes and the bitterness and relentless daring of his warfare against them. He was one of the "Long Hunters" as were others of the Harmans. He married Lydia Skaggs and their children were: Katie, Mathias, Pheby, Adam, Henry, Louisa and Rebecca. He died on Dry Fork of Tazewell County on April 2, 1832.

Adam Harman, third son of Henry. Sr., was born in 1765, married Anna Gardner in 1787 and moved from North Carolina to Virginia about 1776, settling on Walker's Creek in present Bland County, where he lived until his death in 1831. He served as sheriff of Wythe County, Commissioner of Peace of Wythe County and in 1796 was appointed as "viewer of the Bridle Way from James Fisher's across Walker's Mountain to Evansham (Wytheville). His children were: William, who married Parmelia Reeder; Sydna, who married William Cubine; Henry, who married Mary Pauley (their four sons were Methodists preachers); Rhoda, who married "Big" Daniel Harman; Susanna, who married Joshua McGuier; Daniel, who married Mandenor Reedor; Samuel, who married Mary Robinett; Elias, who married a Workman and then Rebecca Rhiner; Wilburn, who married Rachel Workman; Nancy Mariah, who married William McGuire; Elizabeth, who married John Cubine, and Anna who married a Murdock.

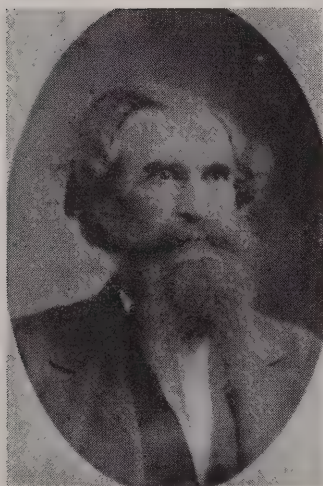
George, fourth son of Henry, Sr., was born in 1767 and married Barbara Lopp of North Carolina and came soon afterwards to Walker's Creek. Their children were: "Big" Daniel, who married Rhoda Harman, and Elizabeth who married first Ephraim Dunbar and upon his death Lewis Neel. George took a conspicuous part in the famous



battle with his father and brothers at the Tug River. He made his home in later years with his daughter, Elizabeth, on Kimberling and is buried at the family cemetery at Holly Brook. "Big" Daniel Harman's son, Robert Wilson, married Mrs. Cynthia J. Oxley (Bird) as his second wife and they were the parents of John Newton Harman, whose book of Harman Genealogy have furnished the information for this family history.

Elias, youngest son of Henry, Sr., was born in 1780 and resided on his father's farm, Holly Brook. He married Polly Davis, who was noted for her piety and their home was used as a place of worship for the Methodist church members. He was a Captain of Militia in Tazewell County. He freed his slaves in 1828, Will Book "A", page 417 of Giles County. His children were: Robert W., who married Rhoda Harman; John W., who married Hester Anne Byrnes; Polly Neel and last Ann Mustard; Colonel William Neel Harman; Dr. James W. Harman; Nancy, who married Mehemiah Henderson; Betsy, who married John Henderson; Louisa, who married Mathias Nichols; and Rhoda who married Edwin F. Sheppard. He died July 23, 1856 and is buried at Holly Brook.

### WILLIAM NEAL HARMAN



One of the most influential men in the formation of Bland County was William Neal Harman, seventh son of Elias Harman, and the grandson of Henry Harman, Sr. William Neal Harman was born at Hollybrook, later which became a part of Bland County, on December 11, 1822. The first schooling that he received was under the tutoring of his cousin Lewis Neal, who could not teach him his ABC's and turned him over to his father who by proper attention enabled him to get started in school. He soon made such rapid progress that he stood at the head of his spelling class consisting of some twenty-five

students, a number of whom were grown men and women. Having learned to read so well, he was called on to read the chapter in the Bible at family worship regularly and became so interested in the Bible that he read it through many times. At the camp meeting at Hoge's camp ground, where Rev. David Burns was conducting the services, he accepted Christ. This occurred on the 13th of April, 1834, between 12 and 1 o'clock at night. Not long after this, his Uncle Hezekiah visited his brother, Elias, and told him of a new college that was being established at Emory, Virginia and named Emory and Henry College. William was immediately enrolled in the new college and after one session in the preparatory department and diligent study while he was at home, he was able to enter college proper and enrolled in Latin, Greek, French, and mathematics. Money running short, he taught one session in Tazewell County and returned to school and was graduated in 1843, and a member of the first graduating class of Emory and Henry College. In the fall of 1843, he started west to seek a location. He accepted a teaching position at Mt. Stelling, Kentucky, and agreed to teach ten months for \$500.00 at the Lulbegrund Academy. After returning to Virginia during vacation, he went back to Kentucky and was employed as principal of Versales High School where he remained for two sessions. From here he went to San Augustine, Texas, served as private secretary to Gen. Sam Houston and was professor of mathematics in Wesleyan College. After serving the college for two years, he was elected president and served for a period of two years resigning because of the failure of his health, and returned to Virginia.

After his return to Virginia, he resolved to read law and was admitted to the bar on the 12th day of May, 1856 and followed his profession until within a year of the close of his life. He, by speeches in parts of Wythe, Giles and Tazewell Counties, had carried a majority of the voters in favor of a new County which was cut off from these three counties and named Bland. Harman was elected the first Commonwealth's Attorney for the new County. The Civil War broke out and at the first term of the County Court in Bland an effort was made to organize a Company of infantry. Harman, being called upon to make a speech, considered the most telling speech was to volunteer, which he did. He was elected Orderly Sergeant of Company

F-45th Virginia Infantry and later became general drill-master for this and other companies. He served throughout the war being promoted to the rank of Colonel. He also served as commander of Company F "Bland Rangers." William Neal Harman died at Bonanza, Arkansas, July 30, 1905.

### CAPT. ISAAC HUDSON

Farmer and grazier of Bland county, with residence near Ceres, was born in Giles County, Virginia, on September 16, 1813. At Burkes Garden, Tazewell county, Virginia, May 8, 1845, he married Elizabeth Peery, who was born at Burkes Garden, July 28, 1826, and died at her husband's home in Bland county, on January 14, 1880. They had seven children, born in the order named: Thomas G., Mary M., Sarah A. C., John M., Hannah J., Josie S. and Isaac H. Thomas was in service in the late war.

About 1835 Mr. Hudson was elected captain of the state militia, and served five or six years as such, then resigned. A few years later he was re-elected to the position, and filled it for five years. In the late war he had two brothers in service, one a lieutenant, George Thomas M., who died early in the war, about September 10, 1861, and Charles John. His father was the late George Hudson, born in Augusta county, Virginia, a fuller by trade, long a magistrate, and some years engaged in farming. Issac Hudson, a fuller of Augusta county was the grandfather of the subject of this sketch, and the family is descended from that Henry Hudson for whom the Hudson river is named. The mother of the present Issac Hudson was Hannah, daughter of Thomas Shannon, who was born and lived at Cloyd's Gap, Giles county. She had two brothers in the war of 1812, John and William. His wife was a daughter of the late Thomas Peery, a planter of Burkes Garden, her mother, Annie, daughter of Philip Gose, who was a pioneer settler of the Garden, taking the first wagon over the mountains to that beautiful spot.

### CAPT. H. C. GROSECLOSE

Peter Groseclose, a pioneer settler in Bland County, Virginia, coming from Pennsylvania, was the father of Henry Groseclose, a prosperous farmer of Rich Valley.

William Groseclose, son of Henry, farmer, many years a magistrate and chief justice, and an Elder in the Presbyterian church, married Adaline C., daughter of Rev. Casper Yost, minister of the M. E. church and farmer, whose wife was a Miss Bickle of Staunton, Virginia. H. C., son of William Groseclose and his wife, Adaline, was born on the old homestead plantation where he resided, August 15, 1843 being the date of his birth. In addition to the care of his estate, he was a merchant of Ceres, and an attorney-at-law, was many years a magistrate, and commissioner in chancery. At the outbreak of the War Between the States he volunteered at Rocky Gap, Bland County, and organized Company G, 36th Virginia Infantry, with which he took the field with rank of first lieutenant. He served with this rank until, in 1863, he was made captain of the company, then commanded the company until made prisoner near Winchester, Virginia, September 19, 1864, after which he was held prisoner of war at Fort Delaware until June, 1865. He had two brothers in the 51st Virginia Infantry, both serving with rank of captain, both made prisoners when he was, held at the same prison, and released at the same time.

Captain Groseclose's wife, whom he married at Burkes Garden, Virginia, September 24, 1868, was born at Burkes Garden, Louvenia V., daughter of Jesse and Angeline Perry. Her father, now deceased, was a farmer of Burkes Garden, a soldier of the late war, and the son of Thomas Peery, a planter of Burkes Garden. Her mother was a daughter of James Mahood, farmer of Burkes Garden, and a niece of Judge Mahood of Giles County, Virginia. The children of Captain Groseclose and wife were eight, born in the order named: Walker K., May Peery, Ina A., Jessie A., Virginia Victoria, Mary A., Anna L., Cassie M.

Captain Groseclose's farm is about one mile west the bloody ground where the Sluss family was massacred about 167 years ago. Of this family the baby in cradle alone was spared, and she lived to reach the advanced age of 100 years, dying in 1882 or '83. The remains of an early fort may yet be seen, about one mile southeast of the farm.

### ALEXANDER SUITER

Alexander Suiter came to Hunting Camp Valley from Clear Fork in 1836. He took a land grant of approximately



1100 acres from the Big Survey. He was later married to Miss Polly Newberry, daughter of Allen Taylor Newberry and Elizabeth Bogle Newberry. Their first home was a log cabin which they built near the site of the present Suiter homestead.

The children of Alexander Suiter and Polly Newberry Suiter were: Frank I., Albert, Samuel S., Elvira, Lucinda and Cosby. Frank I. married Miss Mary Gray Updyke, daughter of Major Albert Updyke of Mechanicsburg, Va., and remained on the Suiter farm his entire life. To this union was born six sons: Trubie, Hubert, Albert, Samuel, Frank Jr., and an unnamed child who died in infancy. Of this group, Samuel was the only one who remained on a portion of the original estate. On October 18, 1905, he married Miss Cordelia Ellen Dutton and to this union was born three sons: Frank, Kermit and Samuel Jr., and two daughters: Vivian and Garnette.

Vivian, a great granddaughter of Alexander Suiter, and her husband, George Ralph Brown, now own and make their home on a portion of the original estate.

### FULTON KEGLEY

Fulton Kegley was born one mile west of Bland Court House on July 1, 1866. His father, Dr. Mitchell Kegley, was a son of Isaac Kegley and was one of the commissioners appointed by the General Assembly of Virginia to lay off the grounds for the Court House. Mr. Kegley's mother was Miss Matilda Johnson of Claiborne County, Tenn. Until the age of 20 he attended the public schools of Bland County. He later became principal of Bland High School and served in this capacity for one year. He began the study of law in the office of Williams Brothers and in 1888 attended the law lectures at the University of Virginia and in the same year passed the bar examination and was licensed to practice.

Mr. Kegley was well known in Southwest Virginia as a Mason and was considered the brightest member of the Bland Lodge No. 206. He was elected Worshipful Master at the election of officers in June, 1891. Mr. Kegley was chairman of the Republican Party and was one of the best posted men in politics in the County. He was a member of the law firm, Williams and Kegley, known for

its wide practice in the County. He is also remembered as Associate Editor of the South West. At the time of Judge Kegley's death, he was serving his third term as circuit judge of the Twenty-Second Judicial Circuit comprising Bland, Giles and Tazewell Counties. He was a director of the Shenandoah Life Insurance Company of Roanoke and a member of the legal advisory board for Bland County during World War I. Judge Kegley was chosen to serve two terms as commonwealth's attorney of Bland County and served as president of the Bank of Bland County, a state bank which was opened in 1903.

### JUDGE MARTIN WILLIAMS

Judge Martin Williams was born in Pittsylvania County, Virginia, on September 25, 1858. His father, like most of the people from Eastern Virginia, was left homeless after the Civil War and therefore had no money or education. He came to Bland County in 1874 and remained for one year after which he returned to Eastern Virginia and was there engaged in farming. Acquiring a little money, he enrolled at Blacksburg College and was able to remain there for two years by supplementing his case by working part time in a blacksmith shop to help defray his expenses.

He returned to Bland County and studied law under his brother, Hon. Sam S. Williams, Judge of the Circuit Court. After practicing law for two years, he enrolled in the University of Virginia Law School. He then returned to Bland and became permanently located. In June, 1883 he married Miss Nannie Mustard.

After the death of the late T. J. Muncy he was appointed to complete the unexpired term as Commonwealth's Attorney. In December 1891, he was elected judge of Bland and Giles Counties. He was commissioned by the Governor of Virginia as a member of the Board of World's Fair Managers. Judge Williams exhibited great ability and activity in matters connected with the World's Fair and was chairman of the Virginia Building Committee.

## BALLARD PRESTON BROWN

Ballard Preston Brown, the son of Colonel George Washington Brown, who was a veteran of the Revolutionary War, and Emma Crump Brown, was born at Crump's Bottom in Giles County, Va.

He came to Bland County in 1861 and while still very young volunteered his services with the Army of the Confederacy and served throughout the Civil War as a messenger. He married Miss Lucinda Robinette in 1867 and to this union was born seven children: George, Wythe, James, Henry, Naff, Emma Crump and Louella.

George Robinette Brown married Miss Mary Shannon McGinnis. Their children were: Virginia, Cynthia and Helen.

Wythe Newberry Brown married Miss Edith Newberry in 1892. Their children were: Chapman, St. Clair, George Ralph, Harry Lake and Wythe Macon.

James Brown married Miss Ethel Hunter Miller in 1905. Their children were: Ruth and Sherwood.

Robert Naff married Miss Annie Byrd in 1912. Their children were Louise and Katheryn.

Descendants of Ballard Preston Brown now living in Bland County are one son, Robert Naff Brown, who lives at the original home place; one grandson, George Ralph Brown; and two granddaughters, Miss Virginia Brown and Mrs. Ruth Brown Kegley.



## WILLIAM LOCKHART YOST

William Lockhart Yost, son of James L. Yost, was a resident of Bland County for some years. He was clerk of the Sharon township, elected in May, 1870 and re-elected in 1871-2-3. He was deputy sheriff of Bland County in 1871 and 1872; supervisor of Sharon township, elected May 28, 1874, and resigned Dec. 7, 1874; began practice of law Oct. 23, 1874; was elected mayor of Seddon, Virginia (now Bland) July 8, 1876, and re-elected in 1877; resigned and went to Wythe County, entering the practice of law there.

## REV. A. A. ASHWORTH

Rev. A. A. Ashworth, pastor in charge of the Baptist church at Bland Court House, was born in Franklin County, Virginia, on May 23, 1818. He was a son of the late Samuel Ashworth, who was a farmer and teacher in Franklin County, and was known and honored in Giles, Mercer and Monroe, all then counties of Virginia. His father, also named Samuel Ashworth, came to America from England in the king's service, and remained here to become an American citizen. He was joined by two of his brothers about the close of the Revolutionary War. The mother of Rev. A. A. Ashworth was Elizabeth, daughter of William Brizendine, a planter of Franklin County. His first wife was Nancy, daughter of Spencer Breeding of Wythe county, Virginia. She died on the 12th of October, 1851. leaving him five sons: Samuel S., William B., James M., and Robert M. and Charles V., twins. The three oldest went into service in the late war: Samuel S., in the 45th Virginia Infantry, was killed at battle of Cloyd's Mountain, May 8, 1864; James M., in Pickett's division, was captured at Farmville, Virginia, on Lee's retreat, April, 1865, was held at Point Lookout, and after his release died on his way home, in hospital at Richmond, Virginia, June, 1865; William B. served in the 45th regiment through the war, was wounded at Cloyd's Mountain. William W. Ashworth, brother of Rev. A. A., was in service in the 10th Virginia Cavalry.

In Montgomery County, Virginia, October 5, 1853, Rev. A. A. Ashworth married Parthena Dobbins, who was born in the county, Rev. Owen Sumner uniting them. Their



children were: Mary Frances, Joseph M., Rufus F., Edmond Lee, and Thomas Newton. Mrs. Ashworth was a daughter of the late Martin Dobbins, granddaughter of Abner Dobbins, both of whom were farmers of Montgomery County. Her mother was Elizabeth, daughter of Curtis Elliott, who also was a farmer of that county. Mr. Ashworth was Commissioner of Revenue two years after the war. He was the first school trustee appointed in the county under the present system, organized the first free school in the county, and built the first school-house for the use of free schools. He was a member of the Masonic fraternity, Bland Lodge.

### MAJOR ELIAS REPASS

Major Elias Repass was born on November 28, 1825, in Bland County, Virginia, eight miles east of his present residence, where he owned and cultivated a farm. He filled the office of constable one year. In 1860 he was elected major in the State militia. In March, 1863, he entered service as quartermaster, and at Pikeville, Kentucky, was captured with the command under Col. J. M. French, taken to Camp Chase, held there one month, then exchanged. He then volunteered in the 26th cavalry regiment, was made ordnance sergeant, and so served until the close of the war. In May, 1864, he was captured near Lynchburg, Virginia, but effected his escape. The late Reuben Repass, his father, a farmer of Bland County, drum major of militia, was a son of Samuel Repass, a farmer of Wythe County, whose father was the Rev. Jacob Repass, who came from Germany, and was a Presbyterian minister. The mother of Major Repass was Esther, daughter of Barnabas Gullion, who served in the wars against the Indians, 1771-5.

Major Repass was twice married; his first wife, whom he wedded April 6, 1850, was Eunice L., daughter of Ransom Tilson, a farmer of Smyth County, Virginia. She died without issue on December 30, 1855. He married secondly at Bristol, Tennessee, in July, 1857, to Adaline E. Groseclose of Bland County. Their children were five: Raymond C., Lafayette D., Hectorine I., Ira Guy and Odessa I. Mrs. Repass was the daughter of the late Jezrael Groseclose, farmer and tanner of Rich Valley, whose father was Henry Groseclose, farmer and magistrate of this valley. Her mother's maiden name was Margaret Carter, whose father, of Scott County, Virginia, was a brother of the late Dale Carter, of Russell County, Virginia.

## SAMUEL H. BERNARD

Samuel H. Bernard was born in Franklin County, Virginia, on March 11, 1832, the son of John Bernard, who was a farmer of that county, and was a son of Walter Bernard, who was a farmer of that county also, and served in the Revolutionary War. The mother of Samuel H. was Judith W., daughter of Caleb Kitchen, also a farmer of Franklin County. His wife, born in that county on July 29, 1847, was Elizabeth H., daughter of the late John Pelter, who was a farmer of Franklin County; her mother, Elizabeth, daughter of Dudley Lumsdell, also a farmer of that county. They were married in Franklin County on January 12, 1868, and had seven children, born in the order named: Roxie E., Elliott O., Beulah A., John S., Weston O., (now deceased), Frederick C. and Lena Estelle.

Mr. Bernard volunteered in 1862 in Franklin County, entering Company G, Dunn's Battalion, which was assigned in Jones' Virginia brigade; he was ten months detailed to make leather for the army, and the remainder of the time, until close of the war, he spent in field service. His brother, John A., a captain in a regiment of Pickett's division, was severely wounded at Gettysburg; another brother, William L., was captured; a third, Charles E., was commissary of Dunn's battalion. Mr. Bernard was a resident of Mechanicsburg, Bland County, a farmer and tanner.

## REV. JAMES T. TAYLOR

Rev. James T. Taylor was a resident of Mechanicsburg, a farmer, minister and merchant. He was born in Pulaski County, Virginia, February 14, 1843, on the south bank of New River, a son of Robert E. Taylor, farmer and school teacher of that county, who was a son of Henry Taylor, farmer and teacher of Montgomery County, Virginia, the family related to the Eatons and Pryors of Virginia. The mother of James T. was Matilda, daughter of Thomas Patton, a soldier of the war of 1812, a carpenter of Pulaski County, whose father was Henry Patton, a farmer and early settler near Dublin, Virginia. His wife, whom he married at Mechanicsburg on April 11, 1872, and born near Mechanicsburg, was Cynthia, daughter of the late Samuel Wohlford, whose record is given on another page with that of his son, Gordon.

Mr. Taylor was county superintendent of schools four years; was a magistrate two years. He entered service in June, 1861, at Newbern, Virginia, Company I, 50th Virginia Infantry, C. S. A.; was captured at Carnifex Ferry, September 12, 1861; held at Camp Chase, Ohio, eleven months, at Johnson's Island four months, then exchanged; took the field again, and served until disabled by severe gunshot wound in knee at Chancellorsville. His father served in the Virginia Reserves, and many relatives were lost in service.

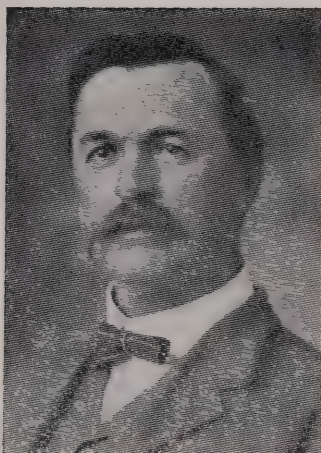
### ROBERT N. FRENCH

Robert N. French, born at Gladeville, Wise County, Virginia, on May 17, 1860, was a son of Gen. James M. French, who was an attorney-at-law in Princeton, West Virginia, and a grandson of George P. French, who was a planter of Bland County. His mother was Rhoda, daughter of Rev. Nehemiah Henderson, of Kentucky. General French entered the Confederate army at the outbreak of the Civil War, and was rapidly promoted through the grades of lieutenant, captain and colonel, until commissioned brigadier-general. After having been wounded in the battles of Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge and Franklin, he was made prisoner, and held at Camp Chase and Johnsons Island, Ohio, until after the close of the war. He represented the senatorial district of which Bland County is a part in the Virginia legislature three terms, and was a centennial commissioner in 1876. He had three brothers in the Confederate army, two holding rank of captain.

At Princeton, West Virginia, February 22, 1882, Robert N. French married Naomi V. French, who was born in Mercer County. They had two sons, Milton Russell and Wirt Merlin, and buried a daughter, Virgie May. Mrs. French was a daughter of Russell G. and Martha (Hale) French, of Mercer County. In the War Between the States her father served in the Federal army, with rank of captain, and was badly wounded in battle of Flat Top Mountain. Her mother was a daughter of Isaac Hale, who was an early and honored settler of Giles County, Virginia.

Mr. French filled the office of notary public in West Virginia for six years. He was engaged in the practice of law in Bland and adjoining counties, with residence at Bland Court House.

## JUDGE SAMUEL W. WILLIAMS



Samuel Walker Williams was born on a plantation, "Leatherwood," in Pittsylvania County, Virginia; he was one of eleven children, all of whom lived to an old age. At the age of fifteen, he joined the Fifth Virginia Cavalry, C.S.A. Though a mere boy and a private, he was prouder of this than anything he accomplished during his life.

The family owned several slaves, as indicated by will of James Masten Williams, of record in Will Book 1, page 353, Pittsylvania County, Virginia. Because the slaves were freed after the war, and being one of such a large family, Samuel left home a young man, and set out for Tazewell Courthouse expecting to practice law there. Late one evening he walked up to the house of Mr. Allen Crockett, Crockett's Cove, Wythe County. Though a stranger, they took him in for the night, where he was well treated. The next morning when he started on his journey, Mr. Crockett told him that he could get over the mountains that day and he thought he would be welcome and well treated at the home of Captain Jack Grayson. This he did, and whether or not the fact that Captain Grayson had several teen-age daughters had anything to do with it or not, he stopped at Bland and located for the practice of law, and went no farther.

After struggling along a young lawyer for several years, he did marry Captain Jack Grayson's oldest daughter, Maggie Grayson. They resided at Bland Courthouse where he practiced law. They raised several children. Their home was located just south of the old courthouse that burned, at which time all the furniture was carried out of the house and down the street because they were so certain the house would burn.



He bought and sold many thousands of acres of land in Bland County, as evidenced by the records in the Clerk's Office of that County. At the time of his death he owned more than four thousand acres of land in Bland County, most of which was situated near Bland Courthouse; he also owned mineral interests on and under perhaps that much more land.

When Captain Grayson's farm was sold, he bought it and permitted Captain and Mrs. Grayson to retain it, rent free, as long as they lived.

When the Grayson ancestral home "Green Meadows" was sold, he bought it and used it for a summer home for many years, having moved to Wytheville to educate his children. When Mr. Sam Newberry's farm, "Eagle Oak" was sold, Mr. Newberry moved to "Green Meadows."

Samuel was always a staunch Democrat and active in politics. He had several young men in his office, several of whom became prominent lawyers, and many of them judges.

He held various important offices during his lifetime, but being elected Commonwealth's Attorney for Bland County and Attorney General of Virginia meant the most to him.

He was never a farmer, but under the efficient management of a life-long friend and farm manager, J. E. Carr, the various farms always made for him plenty of money.

On one occasion a political opponent charged that he was not qualified to hold the office he was at that time seeking because he had not paid his poll tax, only to find that he was not required to pay poll tax in order to vote because he was a Confederate soldier.

## BERKLEY DODD

William Dodd, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, served through the Revolutionary War in the Continental army, and later made his home in Botetourt County, Virginia. His son, William, a soldier of the War of 1812, married Elizabeth Leffell, whose father lived in Maryland, then in Botetourt County, Virginia, then removed to Ohio, where

he died, leaving many descendants. Berkley, son of William Dodd and his wife, Elizabeth, was born in Botetourt County, on the James River, on June 13, 1808. He married in that county, on October 1, 1831, Malinda Ritchie, who was born in Botetourt County, in 1808, and died at Bland Court House, on April 7, 1881. Their children were one son, Lorenzo R., and two daughters, Ann Eliza and Caroline R. Mrs. Dodd was a daughter of Robert and Isabella Ritchie. Her father was a planter of Botetourt County; her mother's people came from Ireland. Bishop Taylor, of the M. E. Church, married a niece of Mr. and Mrs. Dodd, Ann Isabella Kimberlin.

Mr. Dodd was for many years a merchant and hotel keeper at Bland Court House. He filled the office of overseer of the poor for some time, and was a lieutenant of militia before the war. His only son was in service through the war, a lieutenant in the 22d Virginia Infantry; who received a gunshot wound in battle of Dry Creek in Greenbrier County, West Virginia; was captured at Lewisburg and held prisoner of war at Camp Chase, Ohio, several months.

### WILLIAM W. COMPTON

William W. Compton, a farmer and grazier of Bland County, was born April 14, 1821 on Clear Fork, in that part of Tazewell County now included in Bland County. His father was Hickman Compton, who was an early settler and farmer on Clear Fork, and a son of John Compton, a planter on the Blue Stone, who settled there at so early a date that he had to fortify against the Indians. His mother was Elizabeth, daughter of John Justice, a farmer of Clear Fork. His wife, whom he married in Tazewell County on the Blue Stone, December 28, 1843, was Nancy C. Compton. She was born on the Blue Stone, November 10, 1822, the daughter of William Compton, who was a large landowner and planter in Blue Stone, Clark Fork and Mud Fork Valleys, and whose father was John Compton, above-named. Her mother was Jennie, daughter of Hugh and Annie Allen of Botetourt County and in the State of Kentucky, and settled two of his children in Virginia and ten in Kentucky.

The children of William W. Compton and wife are eleven, all living, born in the order named: Martha, Jasper W., Mary J., Francis Marion, John Allen, Matilda C., James B., Thomas Jefferson, Milliard Lee, Wylie Jackson, Vira Agnes. Mr. Compton was a member of the provost guard in Bland County the last year of the war. His oldest son, Jasper, entered service when seventeen years old with rank of lieutenant, and was captain of his company the last year of the war. Mrs. Compton had two brothers in service, John, who was colonel of his regiment, and William, who was out two or three years. Mr. Compton was a member of Harman Lodge No. 222, A.F. & A.M., at Graham, Virginia.

### JOHN CROWE SHANNON

John Crowe Shannon was born March 22, 1827, son of John and Jane (Hudson) Shannon who came to what is now Bland County in about 1818 and bought Sharon Springs Farm.

John C. was an elder in the Sharon-Lutheran Presbyterian Church. He married Mary Jane Grayson, daughter of Randolph and Cynthia (Grayson) Grayson in 1857. They had four children: Henry W., Robert C., Ellen Mary and John Pierce (Tobe).

Mr. Shannon and his family moved to Crab Orchard settlement, which later became the county seat of Bland, and became active in county and civic affairs. He was a court justice, agent for the County of Bland to purchase salt, first postmaster and owned the first store in the town of Bland (Crab Orchard). This store was also used as a church and a school. Mr. Shannon was also president of the Holston Turnpike Authority.

Numerous descendants of John Crowe and Mary Jane live in the county now.

### HON. JOHN A. DAVIDSON

John A. Davidson was born at the old homestead of his family at Rocky Gap on December 24, 1835. He was a son of the late Hon. James C. Davidson, who was a life-long honored resident of that part of Tazewell County,

now included in Bland County; was deputy sheriff of Tazewell County when quite young, about 1815 to 1817; was a member of the Virginia legislature, about 1820 to 1822; was a magistrate of the county thirty years or more, and some time high sheriff. James C. was a son of Joseph Davidson, who was a colonel of militia and a noted man in his day, and whose father came from Dublin, Ireland, to Virginia, and was killed by Indians led by a white desperado named Rice, on Laurel Fork, near Rocky Gap, while returning home from Rockbridge county where he had sold land, and had the proceeds — some \$800 — on his person, when killed and robbed. The mother of Hon. John A. Davidson was Julia H., daughter of William Brown, who was a farmer of Giles County, Virginia.

The subject of this sketch was a merchant and farmer of Bland County, and represented the county in the legislature four years, 1875-9. In the late war he had one brother in service in the 45th Virginia Infantry, and one in Jackson's artillery, and his own service was in Company H, 8th Virginia Cavalry. He entered service at Princeton, Mercer County, in May, 1862, and remained in the field (except when disabled by wound) until Lee's surrender, his last service being guard duty in the streets of Appomattox Court House, on the day of the surrender. He was wounded at Winchester, September 19, 1864, by a gunshot in his left arm; was captured at Five Forks, April 5, 1865, but escaped with horse, arms and accoutrements.

Mr. Davidson was married near Tazewell Court House, December 24, 1872, to Mattie J. Harman, the ceremony taking place at her residence and birthplace. Their six children were born in the order named: John Henry, William Alexander, James Joseph, Julia A., Bessie Rose and Eugene M. Mrs. Davidson was a daughter of the late Col. Henry B. Harman, a farmer, surveyor and land appraiser of Tazewell County, whose father was Hezekiah Harman, an early settler of the county. Her mother was Mary A., daughter of Reuben Fudge of Alleghany County, Virginia. (Her lineage is further traced in Capt. Fudge's History of Tazewell Court House.)

### **JAMES THOMPSON**

James Thompson was born on Clear Fork, in Tazewell County, Virginia, on September 7, 1837, the son of George



W. and Polly J. (Buchanan) Thompson. His father, now deceased, was the son of George Thompson, and a farmer of Clear Fork valley; his mother was a daughter of John Buchanan, who was a farmer of Thompson Valley, Tazewell County. James Thompson was first married on Clear Fork, Tazewell County, in February, 1855, to Floaner, daughter of Thomas B. and Jennie Crabtree. She died on the 17th of March, 1879, aged forty-two years, leaving him seven children: Mary J., John W., George W., Thomas Benton, Sarah M., Bettie and Samuel W. He married secondly in November, 1883, on Clear Fork to Ellen Stebar, who was born in Craig County, Virginia, in 1839, who was the daughter of Isaac Stebar, and who died in August, 1884. Near Saltville, Washington county, on May 17, 1888, he married Susan J. Miller, who was born in Wythe County, Virginia. She is a daughter of the late John Miller, who was a farmer of Smyth County, Virginia, and Susan (Cullett) Miller.

Mr. Thompson was a farmer and grazier of Bland County. During the late war he had a substitute in the field in 1861, and from 1862 to the close of the war he was in active service himself in Company I, 16th Virginia Cavalry. His brother, John W., was a volunteer in Capt. Gose's company of Derrick's battalion, and was mortally wounded in battle of New Market, Virginia.

### THOMAS WOHLFORD

Thomas Wohlford, born at Wytheville, Virginia, March 22, 1835, was a farmer of Bland County. At Mechanicsburg, this county, February 21, 1866, he married Edna O., daughter of Dr. A. J. Nye, and their children were four: Cora Luther, Clyde Carlin, Rosa Wren and Maud Ella. The record of Dr. Nyes family will be found on another page of this work. That of Mr. Wohlford's family is partially given in sketches preceding this one. He is a son of John J. Wohlford, who was born in Pennsylvania, was a soldier of the war of 1812, married Frances Smith, and in later life was a wagon maker of Wytheville. The father of John J. Wohlford was Lewis Wohlford, born in Germany, came to Pennsylvania at an early date with his father Ludwick, and later was a large land owner in Wythe county.

In May, 1862, Thomas Wohlford entered the Confederate service as hospital steward, in which capacity, declining subsequently offered promotions, he served until on

March 2, 1865, he was made prisoner by Sheridan's men. He was released the next day, paroled and not again in service. Two of his brothers were in service in the war with Mexico, and three were in service in the late war; one of these, William, was captured by Wohlford's cavalry at Marysville, Tennessee, and held prisoner of war at Rock Island, Illinois.

### **J. NEWTON JOHNSTON**

J. Newton Johnston, a magistrate of Bland County for the past ten years, owning and cultivating a farm in this county, was born in Giles County, Virginia, near Pleasant Hill on July 10, 1847. When seventeen years old, in August, 1864, he entered the Confederate service and for six months was in Company A, 4th Battalion, Virginia Reserves, then until the close of the war in Company 1, 60th Virginia Infantry. In the last named service, much of the time under Gen. Jubal Early, he marched some fifteen hundred miles. His half-brother, L. P. Johnston, lieutenant of Company I, 36th Virginia Infantry, was wounded at Winchester, and was captured at Waynesboro, March 2, 1865, then held at Fort Delaware until June following.

J. Newton Johnston is a son of the late Russell Johnston, a farmer of Giles County, who was a son of John B. Johnston, a planter of that county, who came from Ireland. His mother was Jane, daughter of John Justice, who was a farmer of Bland County, where the Justice family settled from Pennsylvania. His wife, whom he married near Bland Court House, August 26, 1869, was Geneva E., daughter of John F. Locke, of Bland Court House, a magistrate since about 1850 of Smyth and Bland Counties, and one of the oldest Masons of Southwest Virginia. Her mother was Mary, daughter of James and Elizabeth Bruce. James Bruce was a farmer of Bland County, and the son of Rev. Joshua Bruce of the M. E. church.

### **HENRY G. HICKS**

Henry G. Hicks was born on the homestead farm he inherited and cultivated in Bland County, January 26, 1849. At the birthplace and residence of his bride, Sugar

Ridge, Highland County, Ohio, he married on June 27, 1869, Rebecca J. Henderson. They had no children. Mr. Hicks was postmaster at Hicksville, an office he held for thirteen years, and was a trustee of the M. E. (South) Church at Hicksville, and class leader in the same.

The late Joseph T. Hicks, his father, who was a farmer and the father of Joseph T., came from Ireland. He was one of the first settlers in Wolf Creek Valley, opening up the farm that descended to his son and grandson. The mother of Henry G. was Maria, daughter of William Henderson, who was a farmer of Giles County, Virginia. She was born on the 7th of April, 1814 and died on July 2, 1889. He had two half-brothers in the late war: Peter R. Hicks, who served in Major Harman's Battalion of cavalry and was lieutenant of his company; R. S. Hicks, lieutenant in Company F, 45th Virginia Infantry, was captured at Winchester, September 19, 1864, and held at Fort Delaware until June, 1865. The wife of Mr. Hicks was a daughter of the late Christopher Henderson, a farmer of Highland County, Ohio, and his wife Jane, whose father was also a farmer of that county, James Headington. Three of the brothers of Mrs. Hicks were in the Federal army during the late war.

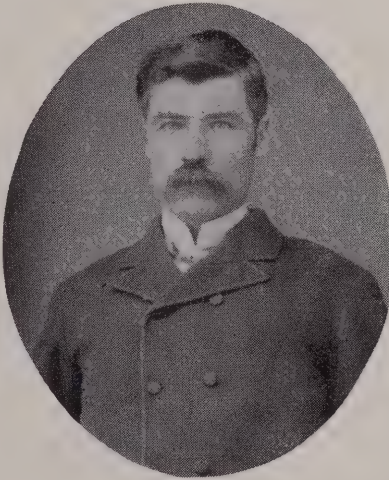
### JOHN HOGE THOMPSON

John Hoge Thompson was born in Bland County on October 21, 1851, on the homestead which has been in the Thompson family for four generations and which he cultivated. The founder of the family in this county was Andrew Thompson, who came from Ireland and married a native of England. He fought in the Revolutionary War, and settled in what is now Bland County where he entered 1,600 acres of land. Amos Thompson, his son, was born and raised on this homestead and was the father of the late Andrew G. Thompson, who was born and raised here, and married Sarah M., daughter of Josiah Hicks, a farmer of Kicksville, Virginia. These were the parents of John Hoge Thompson. Andrew G. Thompson was in service in the late war from 1862 about two years, Company G, 36th Virginia Infantry C. S. A., and left the service on account of disability. There were twenty-seven of the name of Thompson, all descended from Andrew of Revolutionary fame, who were in service in different companies from Bland

County in the late war. Grattan Thompson and William Thompson were killed in battle, the latter at battle of Cloyds Farm.

At Bland Court House, December 18, 1878, John Hoge Thompson married Lue Fannon, and their children are three: Daisy Gay, Thomas Cicero, and Ossie Fannon. She had a brother, Cicero Fannon, who served in the C. S. A. (Bland sharpshooters), Co. F, 45th Virginia Infantry from 1861 to 1864, and died in prison at Indianapolis, Indiana, on August 8, 1864. Mrs. Thompson is a daughter of the late Acles Fannon, who was a hotel-keeper at Bland Court House and was a soldier of the Confederate army from 1862 to 1865. His father was Bryant Fannon, who served in the War of 1812, and was a farmer of Lee County, Virginia. Her mother was Sallie, daughter of Tunis Muncy, who was a farmer of Bland County. Mr. Thompson held office in Bland County four years as commissioner of revenue and eight years as deputy treasurer.

#### CHARLES PEERY MUNCY, SR.



Born June 14, 1854, Charles Peery Muncy, Sr. was the son of Andrew Jackson and Sarah Peery Muncy.

Mr. Muncy, teacher, merchant, banker and political figure, was well known throughout this section. He was known as a pioneer in agriculture and attended Virginia Polytechnic Institute where he was graduated in Agriculture in 1875.

Mr. Muncy owned a general store in the town of Bland and was Clerk of the Court of Bland County from 1885 through 1899. He was the chief promoter and organizer of the Bank of Bland County, of which he was the first Cashier, serving in that position until his death August 21, 1908.



It was during his teaching days in Bland that Charles met and married Mary Ella Mustard on November 13, 1889. To this union was born ten children, eight of whom are living: Minor M., Grat M., Charles P., Jr., (deceased), Andrew N., James B. (deceased); Eloise Kegley (Mrs. B. H.), Kathleen Edwards (Mrs. C. C.), Sarah Elizabeth, Anna Josephine and Nannie Rose.

### THOMAS JACKSON MUNCY



Thomas Jackson Muncy was born in the mountains of Southwest Virginia in Bland County on the 25th of April, 1864. His mother's maiden name was Peery and she was a native of Tazewell County, Virginia, her ancestors being among the first settlers of that county. His father was of French descent, the name originally being spelled "Moncie." His ancestors on his father's side came to America during the Revolutionary War and fought under Lafayette.

Thomas J. Muncy was reared on a farm, working during the summer and attended the county school during the winter until he was nineteen years of age, at which time he entered the "Rural Male and Female Seminary" at Rural Retreat, Wythe County, Virginia, where he attended school for two sessions. He was then appointed a cadet at Virginia Military Institute at Lexington. He studied law in the office of French and Muncy at Bland for a short while and was admitted to the bar. He served his county as Commonwealth's Attorney for twelve years and resigned this office to accept the office of Assistant U. S. Attorney for the Western District of Virginia.

He filled this position for a period of four years and then he returned to his native county and resumed the practice of law. He was prominent in Republican ranks in

Southwest Virginia and was often referred to as Bascom Slemp's right arm.

In the gubernatorial election of 1917, Mr. Muncy was the choice of the Republican party for Governor. He made a strenuous campaign against Westmoreland Davis, but failed to break the large Democratic majority. He was then appointed U. S. District Attorney for the Western District of Virginia. He died in May 1922 while serving in this capacity.

Mr. Muncy married Miss Frances Banks in December, 1892. From this marriage was born three daughters, Mrs. L. J. Langford, Mrs. John G. Jackson and Mrs. Frank M. Stanley, all of Roanoke, Virginia.

### JOHN WM. SHUFFLEBARGER

John Wm. Shufflebarger, carpenter at Hicksville, Bland County, was born in Pulaski County, Virginia, on August 16, 1854. He was married near Hicksville on February 3, 1881 to Henrietta Muncy, who was born in Bland County on December 12, 1861. They had two daughters, Mary Elizabeth and Sarah Ann.

The father of John Wm. Shufflebarger was Newton Shufflebarger, a farmer of this county, near Hicksville, a son of Jacob Shufflebarger, who was a farmer of Pulaski County, who was a son of Lawson Shufflebarger, one of the first settlers in that county. His mother was Ann G., daughter of John Wygal, a farmer of Pulaski County, a soldier of the War of 1812, and a son of Adam Wygal. His wife was a daughter of Tunis Muncy, who was a farmer of Bland County. He died at Camp Chase, Ohio, a prisoner of war in 1864. He was a son of Samuel and Bettie (Simpkins) Muncy of this county. Mrs. Shufflebarger's mother was Mary E., daughter of James Clark, who was a farmer of Bland County, and a Confederate soldier through the late war; his father, Ralph Clark, was a farmer of Monroe County.

Newton Shufflebarger was in service in the Civil War, enlisting in February, 1862, Company E, 45th Virginia Battalion. He was captured near Winchester and held six months at Point Lookout, reaching home a few days before Lee's surrender. He was wounded through the foot

in February, 1863, in a battle at Bull's Gap, Tennessee. He had three brothers and two brothers-in-law in the service; a cousin was killed near Winchester, September 19, 1864.

### RAYMOND CLINTON REPASS

Raymond Clinton Repass was born October 5, 1860 on a farm near Ceres. The Repass family came from Germany in Colonial times and settled in the Valley of Virginia. Reuben Repass, grandfather of Raymond, was born in Wythe County in 1797 and was both a physician and a farmer. His wife, Esther Gullion, was born in 1795 at Sharon Springs Farm, Bland County. Elias Repass, father of Raymond, was born in Bland County on November 28, 1825 at the head of Walkers Creek. He was married to Adeline C. Groseclose. He was a gallant soldier of the Confederacy, attaining the rank of major in the Eighth Virginia Cavalry. He was captured and sent to Camp Chase, Ohio, but was exchanged a month later. Raymond Clinton Repass grew up at the old homestead and assisted in its work and operation until he was thirty years of age. In the meantime, he had acquired a good education in public and private schools and at the age of 21 began teaching. Mr. Repass taught twelve years in the public schools of Bland County. During the summer of 1893 he was appointed Deputy Clerk of Bland and served in that capacity for six years. In May, 1899, he was elected County Clerk beginning the term in July, 1899, and served until his death in February, 1928. He was succeeded as Clerk of Bland County Court by his son, Gilbert R. Repass, who served until June, 1960.

### A. N. THOMPSON

Andrew Thompson came to America from Ireland in colonial days, and fought for American independence in the Continental army. He settled in what is now Bland County and was a large land owner east of Bland Court House. His son, Amos, in turn farmed the same land. Amos was the father of Joshua Thompson, who was a farmer near Point Pleasant and was married to Esther Smith. A. N. Thompson, their son, subject of this sketch,

was born near Point Pleasant, July 15, 1840. He volunteered for service in the Southern army at Wytheville, May 29, 1861, and served until the close of the war in Company F, 45th Virginia Infantry. In August, 1863, in the battle of Piedmont, he was made a prisoner and was held at Camp Morton, Indiana, for nine months. A brother in service, captured at the same time, was held prisoner until the close of the war. Mr. Thompson resided at Bland Court House, engaged in business as carpenter and undertaker. He was a member of Bland Lodge, No. 206, A. F. & A. M., was a school trustee for fifteen or sixteen years, and was deputy clerk for several years. He was a past S. & J. W. in Bland Lodge.

In Mercer County, West Virginia, September 21, 1865, he married Julina H. Bird, and the children of the union were eleven, born in the order named: Luther E., Angelo B., Roxie I., Lillie V., Bertha M., Estil L., Edward H., Nellie A., Albert K., Eveline B. and Robert Bruce. Mrs. Thompson was born in Franklin County, Virginia, a daughter of Rev. B. T. Bird and Arrena (Oxley) Bird. Her father, a Baptist clergyman, was a son of the late Luke Bird.

### JOHN A. BARNITZ

John A. Barnitz was a resident of Sharon Springs, Bland County, postmaster there in 1869, and superintendent of the Springs. He was a notary public for four years, and filed the office of registrar for four years. In 1861 he entered the quartermaster's department of the Confederate army, and served in the field for three years, with headquarters at Richmond much of the time. Then, in February, 1864, he volunteered in Company F, 14th cavalry regiment, with which he was in active service, most of the time in the Virginia valley, until the close of the war. He was a member of Wytheville Lodge, A. F. & A. M., at Wytheville, Virginia.

John A., son of William Barnitz, was born in Christiansburg, Virginia, June 13, 1832. He married Mary J. Douthat at Christiansburg, July 9, 1857. Mary was a native of Christiansburg. Their children were two sons, Charles H. and William G. Mr. Barnitz's father was a son of George Barnitz, of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, whose father came from Germany. He married the mother of John A., Elizabeth, a daughter of Richard Trovillo, who



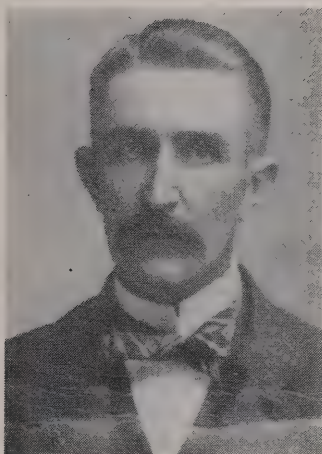
came to Chambersburg from England. In 1823 William Barnitz removed from York County, Pennsylvania, to Christiansburg, Virginia, where he passed the remainder of his life. He was postmaster there ten or twelve years. The wife of John A. Barnitz is a daughter of the late Henry Y. Douthat, a farmer and superintendent of Sharon Springs. Mr. Douthat was in service in Southwest Virginia in the Civil War in the quartermaster's department. He was a son of Robert Douthat, who came to Virginia from Hagerstown, Maryland, and his wife, mother of Mrs. Barnitz, was Eliza, daughter of Abram Baylor, of the Valley of Virginia.

### JOHN BURTON

John Burton, merchant, hotel keeper at Mechanicsburg, and a farmer of Bland County, was born September 4, 1844, on Wolf Creek in what is now Bland County. On August 23, 1866 at Mechanicsburg, he married Victoria E. Hare, who was born near Mechanicsburg. He was a son of the late James Burton, a farmer on Wolf Creek, whose father, James Burton, was also a farmer there. His mother was Elizabeth, a daughter of Henry Prewett, who was a farmer of that part of Bland County formerly included in Tazewell. His wife was a daughter of Capt. James F. Hare, farmer of Giles County, who in the late war commanded Company H, 36th Virginia infantry regiment, was wounded and captured at Winchester on September 18, 1864, and held prisoner of war at Fort Delaware for nine months. His father was William Hare, planter of Giles County, and a son of Joseph Hare of that county. Her mother was Eliza, daughter of Isaac Hale, who was a farmer of Giles County and a soldier of the War of 1812.

Mr. Burton was postmaster at Rocky Gap for seven years and held the office of United States Gauger something over a year, and then resigned it. He volunteered in the Civil War in 1863, served in Major Harman's battalion of cavalry about three months. He was then transferred to Company B, Frencher's battery, Stark's artillery. On October 4, 1864, he was severely wounded and disabled by a gunshot wound through the lungs. He was then near Fort Harrison, seven miles below Richmond. He had four brothers in the Confederate service, one of them, Lewis, received a gunshot wound in the hand.

## W. A. NEWBERRY



William Allen Taylor, youngest child of Harman and Mary McDonald Newberry, was born February 26, 1868 at the family home "Oak Lawn." His mother was a daughter of William and Maria McDonald of Wyoming County, W. Va.

The early part of his education was acquired on his father's farm. A private teacher, paid by the Newberrys and neighbors, taught classes in a one room log house on the farm. The twenty-five or thirty students ranged in age from very young to early teens.

When William Allen left home he attended Roanoke College at the time Roanoke was called "Big Lick."

On June 5, 1895, Mr. Newberry and Ida Kate Kegley were married by the Rev. H. G. Clemens. She died about two years later when their daughter was born.

Rev. W. C. Crockett officiated at Mr. Newberry's second marriage to Lucy Virginia Kidd, of Tazewell County. There were two children by this marriage, Marie Spencer (Mrs. Robert T. Stone) and Virginia Jamerson (Mrs. Meek Hoge Bowen.)

"W. A." (as he was called by his friends), was interested in farming, livestock and civic affairs. At the time of his father's death in 1915, he became President of Newberry Land, Coal and Coke Company. This company, owned by the heirs of Harmon Newberry, held property in several West Virginia counties and cities and in Virginia.

Newberry's Chapel, a small church built by his ancestors, was one of Mr. Newberry's interests. He, along with a few close relatives, were the last members of this church.

As a member from Seddon District, he served on the Board of Supervisors from 1919 until 1927. He made several trips to Richmond in behalf of Bland County's first highway, Route 21 and 52.

When Bland Hosiery Mills, Inc., was established in Bland, Mr. Newberry was responsible for helping to found Bland's first industrial plant.

From the years 1927 until 1950 when he died, he served as President of the Bank of Bland County.



**"Oak Lawn" — W. A. T. Newberry Home**

### **GILBERT RAYMOND REPASS**

Gilbert Raymond Repass, who served as Clerk of the Court of Bland County for thirty-two years, succeeded his father in that office which had not been out of the family since the beginning of the present century.

Mr. Repass was born in Bland County, April 12th, 1893, a son of R. C. and Juliet E. Repass, and a descendant of the Rev. Stephen Repass, who came to America from Germany, and was one of the early German settlers in Western Virginia. His grandfather, Major Elias Repass, was from an early date identified with Bland County. He served with distinction in the Confederate army in the War Between the States, and at its close returned to his home county where he was a farmer, stock raiser and merchant.

R. C. Repass was born in Wythe (now Bland) County. He had a private school education and was a man of sound knowledge and varied accomplishments. He taught in the public schools of Bland County, and also held the office of

County Surveyor for a number of years. For six years he was deputy clerk and served twenty-eight years as Clerk of the Court. During the last year of his life, he was elected without opposition for another term. He died February 19th, 1928.

Gilbert Raymond Repass was educated in public schools, including the Bland High School. He attended the National Business College at Roanoke until 1913, in which year he went to work under his father as deputy clerk.

He worked with his father for four years, then spent three years in farming and stock-raising, and for seven years was a rural mail carrier. In February, 1928, he was appointed to fill out the unexpired term of his father, and brought to the office the same care and systematic attention which distinguished the elder Repass in handling the records of the county. He was twice elected Clerk without opposition.

He was married at Bland, May 6th, 1916, to Miss Hazel Edna Bruce. His wife was educated in the county schools and at Sullins College, Bristol, Virginia, and is the daughter of the Rev. James Edward and Edna Harris Bruce. Her father gave the greater part of his life to duties as a Minister of the Gospel in the Holston Conference of the Methodist Church.

Mr. Repass was a member of Bland Lodge No. 206, A. F. & A. M., past president of Bland Kiwanis Club, past Worthy Patron of Bland Chapter No. 41, O E S, and a faithful and loyal member of the Bland Methodist Church.

He died June 15, 1960, leaving his widow and three children, David Edward, Edna Elizabeth and Gilbert Raymond Jr., and five grandchildren surviving him.

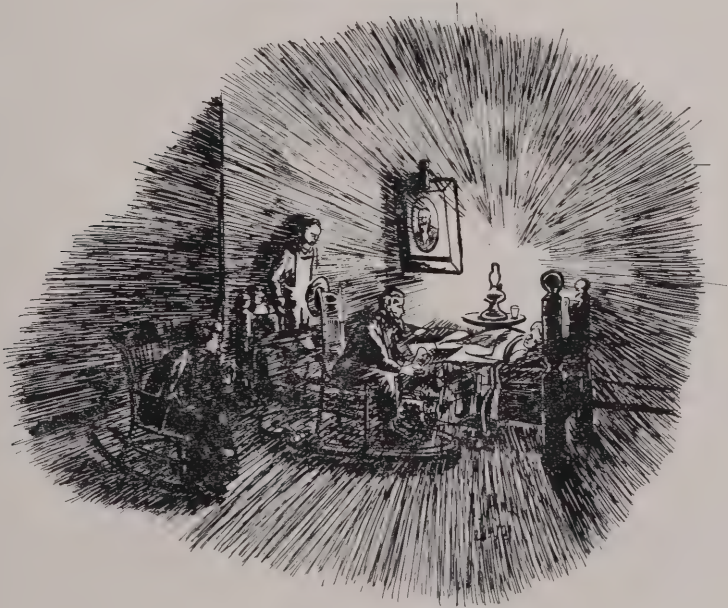




## CHAPTER IV

### DOCTORS OF BLAND COUNTY

The country doctor was one of the best loved and respected men of his community. Many parents showed their regard for him by naming their children in his honor and today you will find names repeated of the first doctors of the county. He served more than the physical needs of his patients, often serving them in courts of law. We find in the records in the Court House that three of the fifteen justices of the County of Bland appointed by the Governor of Virginia on August 15, 1861 were doctors, namely, William M. Bishop, William E. Hoge and William Groseclose, elected presiding justice. They served as county officers, ministers and commissioners in settling estates. They were well educated men, although some of their education was gleaned from self-education and apprenticing themselves to established physicians. It was necessary for them to have other means of income, as they received little money for their ministrations, often being paid in farm



products, so we find that most of them owned farms. Dr. Morton (History of the Pennsylvania Hospital) does not hesitate to say: "We find that the professional men of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were generally much better educated than most of their successors of the present time. Almost without exception they were classical scholars, their graduating theses had to be written in Latin."

We do not have a complete record of all the doctors who served what is now Bland County, but have found documentary evidence of those listed.

### DR. STEPHEN A. REPASS

Stephen A. Repass was born on what is now known as the Brown Morehead farm in Wythe County on August 2, 1805 in a log cabin known as the "Jack Boyd Cabin." He came to Bland County when just a boy. He was the son of Fredrick and Barbara (Tarter) Repass who acquired an extensive tract of land in Bland on Walkers Creek. Fredrick and Barbara were real pioneers, and their home was frequently visited by passing bands of Cherokee Indians who were entertained and who were very friendly to the Repass family. Fredrick was born August 18, 1774, probably at Frederick, Maryland, and died July 8, 1861. He was buried on his farm in Bland County. Barbara, wife of Fredrick, was born April 21, 1775 and died June 14, 1848.

Stephen A. Repass studied medicine and during all his active life practiced in Bland County. He also owned and operated a farm. He married Rosannah Brown, daughter of Christopher Brown, Jr., who was born June 10, 1810 and who died October 17, 1901. Their children were James Augustus Repass, Eliza Jane Repass, Barbara Ann Repass, Mary Adeline Repass, William Gordon Repass, John Asa Repass, Sarah Theresa Repass and Lucinda Katherine Repass. James Augustus volunteered for the Confederate Army but was sent back to tend the mill and make saltpeter; and his son, James Franklin Repass, became a doctor serving Bland and Wythe Counties. Dr. Stephen A. Repass died August 7, 1876 and he and Rosannah are buried in the Repass cemetery in Sharon District of Bland County.

## DR. WILLIAM GROSECLOSE



Dr. William Groseclose, son of Henry Groseclose and Elizabeth Copenbarger Groseclose was the grandson of the pioneer Peter Groseclose who married Mary Magdalene Ott, daughter of John Jacob Ott and Elizabeth Keller of Wila, Switzerland. Peter came to this country from Germany in 1750 and settled first in Pennsylvania, later in Wythe Co., Virginia, now Ceres, Bland County.

The land grant to Peter Groseclose was surveyed in 1782 and signed by Patrick Henry.

Dr. William Groseclose was born April 1, 1810 and married Adeline Cooper Yost April 26, 1836. Adeline was the daughter of Rev. Casper Yost of Staunton, Virginia. Rev. Casper Yost later moved to Wythe Co., Va. and was the first Methodist Episcopal minister to settle in Wythe Co. where he founded the church of that denomination. He preached at times on top of Walkers Mt. He was for many years a magistrate of Wythe Co., a leading Mason, and a man of wide social and Christian influence.

Records show that Dr. William Groseclose was practicing medicine in Wythe Co. when Bland Co. was formed in 1861. A renewal of his license to practice medicine was signed by F. I. Suiter, Commissioner of the Revenue, in April, 1862.

To give some idea of the small remuneration for medical services of that time, a statement in 1861 shows a charge of \$8.00 for four personal visits plus medication.

In addition to his medical practice he was the first presiding justice in Bland Co. and served as administrator of various estates as well as guardian of a number of minor children in need of guidance.

The children of Dr. William Groseclose and Adeline C. Yost were:

Euphemia — married Granville D. Tilson; later married N. P. Dodson

Margaret — married Wm. J. Hubble



James A. Tyler — married Eliza Jane Groseclose  
Henry Casper — married Lavinia Victoria Peery  
Adam Dallas — married Parthena Wall  
William Lockhart — died at an early age  
Mary Jane — married John Greever Peery

Dr. William Groseclose died June 14, 1871 and was buried in Sharon Cemetery, Ceres, Va.

### DR. JOHN H. HOGE

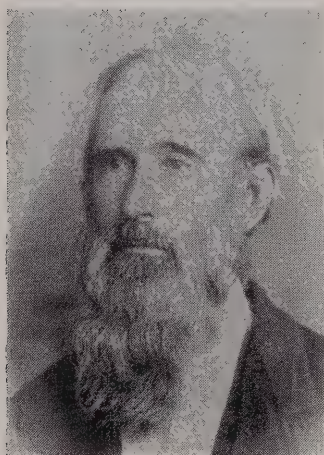


John H. Hoge was born in Ohio, May 15, 1815, son of Daniel and Ann (Stafford) Hoge. His mother, daughter of James Stafford, came from Ireland when she was eleven years old. Dr. Hoge was a descendant of William and Barbara (Hume) Hoge who came to America in 1682 on the ship, *Caladonia*, and settled in Pennsylvania. In their old age they migrated to the Valley of Virginia and gave land for the old Presbyterian Church at Opequon, Virginia. They were buried in the old church cemetery. Their grandson, James, came to southwest Virginia searching for a brother, John, supposedly lost in the Revolutionary War. Here he found a lovely lady, Elizabeth, daughter of Joseph and Ellen (Dunbar) Howe, married her, and from them we have the descendants of the Hoge family in southwest Virginia. Dr. John Hoge's family moved to what is now Bland County in about 1819 and settled on what is known as the G. H. Morgan farm below Mechanicsburg. His father, Stafford Hoge, was a blacksmith, farmer, and magistrate of this region.

John H. Hoge married three times, Miss Elizabeth Moore, Miss Charlotte Trollinger, and Miss Sarah Trinkle. Although he had no children of his own, he reared several orphan nieces including Mrs. Wiley (Molly Hoge) Comp-ton and Mrs. James (Sue Hoge) Robinett. He was a

minister in the Methodist Church and was instrumental in the building and organization of Hoge Chapel Methodist Church at Point Pleasant in 1879. He was a farmer, deputy clerk of the county for one year, magistrate, and a member of Bland Lodge No. 206, A. F. & A. M. He published a series of articles in the local newspaper called "Reminiscences" which have preserved some of the early history of Bland County. The county lost one of its most colorful as well as industrious citizens when he died at his home near Point Pleasant on May 29, 1895.

### DR. WILLIAM EDWARD HOGE



William Edward Hoge was born at the old home, now called Belle Hampton, in Pulaski County, Virginia on May 26, 1822. He was a descendant of the early settlers of the New River area on the Haven, Hoge and Howe sides of his family. His father, General James Hoge, who was commissioned Brigadier General of the Nineteenth Brigade Militia, State Troops, on February 19, 1831, was a son of James and Elizabeth (Howe) Hoge. He married his first cousin, Eleanor Howe, daughter of Daniel and Nancy (Haven) Howe, thus giving his descendants double Howe blood. The Howe family is descended from Joseph Howe, said by some of the family historians to have been a brother of Lord George Augustus Howe, and his Scottish wife, Ellen Dunbar, who came to America in 1737. Joseph helped construct a line of forts from Duquesne southward for the protection of the Virginia frontier.

W. E. Hoge came to Point Pleasant or "Slide" community, Bland County, from Newbern, Virginia, where he had begun his practice, in about 1855. He was married to Jane L. Meek, daughter of Justianna (Dickenson) and James Meek of Hope Manor, Glade Spring, Virginia on August 20, 1844. They were the parents of Eleanor, who

died young; James Meek who married Maria Higgenbotham; Robert S.; William Howe, who married first Ollie Mahood and then Vicie J. Mustard; and Olive, who married Colonel James Browning. Jane (Meek) Hoge was born March 13, 1825 at the old Stone House at Glade Spring, Virginia, and attended school at Salem College, now Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Dr. Hoge and his wife were great readers and owned a fine library, both being well-versed in Latin. In 1882 he deeded land for the Point Pleasant School near the location of the old Point Pleasant Academy, and his wife and son, W. H. Hoge, deeded the land for the original Bland Presbyterian Church in 1892. They were members of the Ceres Presbyterian Church until a church was established nearer their home. His love of fine horses has passed down in the family and his home was always open to all his family and friends. His nephew, former Governor James Hoge Tyler, spent much time in his home during his boyhood. Dr. Hoge owned farming land in Bland, Burkes Garden, Abbs Valley and Belspring, Virginia. He was a Democrat and a charter member of Bland Lodge No. 206, A. M. & F. M., serving as its first Worshipful Master in 1867.

Dr. Hoge was a well-educated man, meticulous in his dress and a respected man in his community. He assumed the responsibility of his wife's niece and nephew, Sophia and Eugene Edmondson, whose parents and brother Tommie had died in the yellow fever epidemic near Memphis, Tennessee in 1878. He made the trip to Memphis and, concealing the two small children under his buggy seat, brought them out of the area and home to Bland County. Eleanor Hoge, who later married James Robinett, came to his home at twelve and remained there until her marriage. She was the daughter of George D. and Rebecca (Pearis) Hoge and her daughter, Birdie, later married Eugene Edmonson. Dr. Hoge was called to the Battle of Cloyd's Mountain as a surgeon in the Confederate Army. According to family records, he performed an appendectomy on a patient on Spur Branch that was unusual for its time. He was considered very good in diphtheria cases, which was a dangerous childhood disease of that time. Dr. Hoge died February 3, 1885, and Jane, May 7, 1894, and they were buried at the old Howe and Hoge cemetery in Pulaski County.

## DR. WILLIAM M. BISHOP



William M. Bishop, who came from eastern Virginia, practiced medicine on Clear Fork, now Bland County, Virginia. He was born May 11, 1824, died July 29, 1897, and he and his wives were buried in the Bishop cemetery on Clear Fork. He married first Lucy Ann Wiley, born in 1827, died in 1860; and second Naomi John, born July 10, 1826 and died September 11, 1897. He was a farmer and his home was where Mr. John Kinser now resides. He established Bishop's Chapel Methodist Church and was a member of the Democratic Party. He

was a man of unusual intelligence as was evidenced by his management of his wife's property. He was a member of Bland County Board of Supervisors in 1871-72. He had, at one time, a large watermelon patch and, since thieves raided it often, he doctored one of the largest melons. Shortly afterward, in the middle of the night, he was called to a home on the side of the mountain. He questioned the sick man as to what he had eaten and was given the answer that the only thing unusual was watermelon. The doctor answered, "Yes, and I know where you got it." Whether this stopped the raids on the patch is not known.

William and Lucy Ann (Wiley) Bishop had two children: Betty, who married Dan Bailey of Clear Fork, and Lucy Anne, who married first Milton Brown of Wolfe Creek, second a Linticum, thirdly a Brown, and fourth Jack Stowers. Lucy Anne and Milton Brown had one child, Martha Elizabeth, who married J. Newton Johnston and then W. J. Blankenship. William and Naomi (John) Bishop had one child, James J. Bishop, who became a doctor and practiced on Clear Fork, Bland County, for about twenty-five years. He was a graduate of Richmond Medical College and moved from Bland to Orange County, Virginia, and from there to Ivanhoe, Virginia, where he died and was buried in Wythe County. He married first Ella Morgan, of Catawba, Virginia, born October 26, 1871,



died January 11, 1900. Their children were Mary, John Mason and Ella. His second marriage was to Nannie Morgan, sister of Ella.

### DR. LORENZO JOHN MILLER



Lorenzo John Miller, son of Charles T. and Anna (McNiel) Miller, was born June 7, 1828 on Walker's Creek near Crandon, now Bland County, Virginia. He lived and practiced medicine on Kimberling and died there on July 17, 1896. He married Martha Lois Bird, daughter of Elizabeth (Brown) and John Bird, who was born August 23, 1828 in Floyd County and died on Kimberling, March 24, 1904. Anna McNiel was the daughter of Jacob and Anna McNiel. John and Anna Miller reared a large family: William Rice, who married Emma Jane Morehead; Lorenzo Meek, who married Beckie Mae Finley; Dr. Dan A.; John Harvey, who married Minnie Wright; Martha Josephine, who married Dr. Jacob Adam Wagner; Michataie Kinzer, who married Huston Helvey; Sarah Anne, who married L. D. Helvey; Victoria Davis, who married Jefferson Davis Wilson; and Mary Isobelle, who married Gordon Morehead.

Dr. Miller was Commissioner of Revenue for Bland County for eighteen years and was a Republican. He was a minister in the Methodist Church and kept the hotel at Kimberling Springs at one time. Dr. Miller was one of the few doctors in Bland and surrounding counties and was often called into West Virginia. The story is told that on one of his trips, riding a horse called Logan that had been given him by the Masons of Logan, West Virginia, he was attacked by a panther on the mountain and killed it.

A great-grandson of Dr. Miller is now a student at Medical College of Virginia, and the people of Bland County will welcome David Miller and his wife, Janet (Bird) Miller back to our community when he receives his medical degree.

## DR. MITCHELL KEGLEY

Mitchell Kegley was born March 30, 1835 near Crab Orchard in what was then Wythe County but later became Bland County. Within one-half mile of what is now Bland Court House, Mitchell Kegley spent his entire life with the exception of a very few years.

Endowed by nature with a splendid mind, he studied medicine and was graduated from Cincinnati Eclectic College of Medicine and began practice in Claibourne County, Tennessee. Here he married Matilda J. Johnson, October 21, 1860. As a result of this marriage three children were born: Mary R., wife of William H. Tilson; Fulton Kegley, who became Judge of the Twenty-Second Judicial Circuit of Virginia; and Henry Clinton Kegley, who became a Presbyterian minister. Dr. Kegley died March 13, 1894, and Mrs. Kegley died in 1908.

Dr. Kegley's ancestors came to Virginia in colonial times from Germany and settled in the Valley of Virginia. His great-grandfather, George Kegley, came from the Valley to Wythe County and acquired considerable land. His son, Issac, father of Mitchell, was born in Wythe County in 1808; migrated to what is now Bland County and married Prudence Devor, daughter of James Devor; and acquired the farm and homesite where Dr. George B. Kegley now lives. Issac Kegley was one of the first six commissioners appointed for the founding of Bland Court House and Bland County.

Mitchell Kegley served as a Confederate soldier in the 8th Virginia Cavalry. He later was with the Internal Revenue Department and was postmaster at Bland for many years. He was more independent in politics than many and although he attended church, he refused to join any particular denomination.

## DR. A. J. NYE

Dr. A. J. Nye practiced at Mechanicsburg, Bland County, Virginia at about the time of the War Between the States. He came from Wythe County and lived at the old Burton home, now the Will Stafford property. He was the father of seven children: Edna, who married Thomas

Wohlford; Nannie, who married Thomas Neel; Rose, who married first Tom Hamilton, one time clerk of the county, second Judge Wiley; Maria, who married Will Britts; George; W. P.; and John Nye. His three sons served in the Confederate army. W. P. and John Nye became dentists. From an article in the South West Newspaper on March 17, 1894, "Dr. A. J. Nye has been very sick the past week"; it is assumed he died in that year.

The day the Yankees came up the valley intent on plundering the village of Mechanicsburg, Dr. Nye came out of his house, gave the Masonic sign to the captain in charge, a Mason, and the village was spared. The soldiers moved on down to the old John Mustard farm and completely ransacked the home, taking all the food and livestock. The villagers, who were watching from the other side on a ridge, said it looked like a small village from the number of camp fires built to cook their loot. The youngest son of the family, Tom Mustard, was taken when they left and it was some time before he escaped and returned home.

In the records at the Court House we find that Dr. Nye was appointed overseer of the road from Mechanicsburg to Brick Church on Kimberling. He was the registrar for Mechanicsburg District.

#### DR. DANIEL ALEXANDER MILLER



Daniel Alexander Miller, son of Dr. L. John and Martha Lois (Bird) Miller, was born on Kimberling, June 1, 1853, and began the practice of medicine at eighteen years of age. He attended the county schools and was a graduate of Baltimore Medical College. He married Mary Elizabeth Newberry, daughter of Robert and Margaret (Hunter) Newberry, and their children were: John Robert, who married Cecil Wohlford; Nannie White, who married John T. Bogle; Martha Ada, who married Cicero Thompson; Mary Ella, who married Arthur Waddle; Elizabeth Hunter, who married Harry Saunders; Jessie

Estelle, who married William Holloway; Janie, who married Charles Anderson; and Maggie Pearl.

Dr. Dan Miller practiced and lived at Mechanicsburg, Virginia, and is said to have charged a dollar a trip while making his rounds on horseback. A newspaper clipping tells the story of an incident that happened in Oceana, West Virginia, at the beginning of his practice. He was called to see a patient one night when the Guyandot River was full due to heavy rains.

Dr. Miller rode a small mule and the man who came for him rode a large horse, and, when attempting to ford the river, the mule went under. The man on the horse pulled the mule up by his large ears and, although Dr. Dan's saddle bags containing his instruments were lost, he made the other side. About thirty years ago the saddle bags were found caught in the driftwood along the river after a storm. The bags were home-made and of sturdy construction and were in fair condition when found. They were on display at Charleston, West Virginia in the museum for some time. Dr. Miller died at his home on June 12, 1880, of Bright's Disease. He was a member of Byrnes Chapel Methodist Church and in politics was a Democrat.

#### DR. JAMES WASHINGTON HARMAN



James Washington Harman belonged to a long line of pioneers of southwest Virginia, many of whom lived a regular frontier life. He often spoke of his kindred having the "big Indian fights" down on the Sanday. He was the son of Captain Elias Harman, who was commissioned in the War of 1812 and later served as deputy surveyor and justice of the Court of Tazewell County. Elias's father was the famous hero of the battle of the Tug, Henry Harman, Sr. Elias and his wife, Polly (Davis), lived on the picturesque homestead



"Holly Brook" and here their family was born: James W., William Neal, Robert, John W., Mrs. Rhoda Sheppard, Mrs. Elizabeth Henderson, Mrs. Levicy Nichols, and Mrs. Nancy Henderson.

Margaret Caroline Ward, who married Dr. James W. Harman in 1853, was a daughter of Dr. Ephraim and Nancy (Davis) Ward of Smyth County, Virginia. Their children were: Laura, who married Luther Moore; Ward; Nannie, who married Snow Crawford; Emaline, who married MacCloski Farmer; and Claude Hamilton, who married Callie Spracker. Janette Patton, daughter of Robert and Mary Patton, became his second wife on November 25, 1890, and their children were: Callie S., who married Howard C. Walker; Goldie, who married Ted McGurdy; Flora, who married Joe Ed McGuire; Ada N.; Thomas, and Dewey.

Dr. Harman was a farmer, merchant, and teacher in early life; in his later days, due to the influence of his father-in-law, Dr. Ephraim Ward, he gave all his attention to the practice of medicine. He was a very sensible man and was considered a safe allopathist. The poor people received much of his service, "pay or no pay". He was a great reader and was an old time Methodist, believing strongly in the doctrine of Wesley. He served in the Confederate Army under his brother, William Neal Harman, with Co. F., 8th Virginia Cavalry. His home was at Mechanicsburg, Virginia at the "Town Spring" and there he died in 1904, age 84 years. He and his wives were buried in the Mechanicsburg Cemetery.

### DR. JACOB ADAM WAGNER

Doctor Jacob Adam Wagner, the grand old man of Bland County and often spoken of as Bland County's first citizen, passed from this life October 15, 1941. Many of his friends think that some of the most beautiful words ever spoken, credited to a great Civil War general would apply to Doctor Wagner: "Let us cross over the river and rest under the shade of the trees." Doctor Wagner was not a military general, but he was a general in life and commanded his associates and fellowmen by his untiring devotion and servitude to them and to his community.



Doctor Wagner died a tired man: tired from physical exertions, but not tired from the offerings of the goodness and kindness that was in his heart and soul. His life in medicine was devoted to the poor more so than the rich. His life in education was devoted to the youth of our county. Doctor Wagner was born on a farm in the Valley of Kimberling, Bland County, Virginia, March 10, 1861. His people have been in this section of Virginia for generations. The Wagner ancestors came from Germany and were colonial settlers in Montgomery County, Virginia. Doctor Wagner's great-grandfather, George Wagner, was a native of Virginia and one of the pioneers in the Kimberling Valley of what was then Giles, now Bland County. He married a Miss Kidd, a native of Virginia. Adam Wagner, grandfather of Doctor Wagner, was born in Kimberling Valley, and after his marriage acquired the farm of his father-in-law on Walkers Creek in what is now Bland County. He spent the rest of his life there as a successful farmer. His wife was Elizabeth Hutsell, who was born in 1814 on Walkers Creek, in what was then Wythe County. She died at the home of her grandson, Doctor Wagner, at Bland in November, 1898.

James Wagner, father of Doctor Wagner, was born at the Walkers Creek home in 1826. He became a farmer and, at the beginning of the War Between the States, joined the Confederate army. He died of typhoid fever while in Monroe County, West Virginia, in 1862. He was a Democrat and a Methodist. James Wagner married Ailsey Munsey who was born near Staffordsville in Giles County in 1826, and died at the old homestead in Bland County in 1911. She was the mother of three children. David Wagner volunteered for service in the Spanish-American War, went to Cuba and returned to the State of Ohio where he died August 19, 1942. The only daughter, Elizabeth, died in infancy.

Jacob A. Wagner, youngest child, was three years old when his father died. He was reared on a farm, attended

private and public schools in Bland County, and finished his high school work at the age of eighteen. He was a student practically all his life, and as a young man qualified for a successful career as a teacher. For twenty years he was principal of schools in Bland County, served as county surveyor four years, and deputy-county clerk three years. In 1898 Doctor Wagner entered the Medical College of Virginia, at Richmond, and was graduated Doctor of Medicine in 1901. He practiced in Bland County until his death.

In July, 1921, he was called upon to resume his educational services when elected County Superintendent of Schools for a term of four years. He had under his supervision thirty-four schools, forty-eight teachers, and a scholarship enrollment of 1,500. Doctor Wagner owned a modern home in Bland, a neat store building erected in 1923, and was proprietor of the old Fannon Hotel Building. He was a Democrat, a steward of the Bland Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and was active in fraternal affairs, being a member of Bland Lodge No. 206, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons; Bland Chapter of the Order of Eastern Star, Bland Lodge of Odd Fellows; Crab Orchard Council; Junior Order United American Mechanics; and Bland Camp of the Modern Woodmen of America. He was a member of the Virginia State Teachers' Association and of the Medical Society of Virginia. Doctor Wagner was a director in the Bank of Bland County. During the World War he was on the Advisory Examining Committee for Wythe and Bland Counties, and after the war he acted for several years as local examiner in Bland County for disabled soldiers.

On February 10, 1881, in Kimberling valley, he married Miss Josephine Miller, daughter of Dr. John L. and Martha (Bird) Miller, both now deceased. Her father for a great many years carried on a large practice as a physician. Doctor and Mrs. Wagner had two daughters. Miss Naomi was a graduate of Martha Washington College, Abingdon, Virginia, and for a number of years was a teacher in the Bland High School and other schools in this and surrounding counties. She died March 31, 1957. Effie, the second daughter, also finished her education at Martha Washington College, taught for several years, and married John C. Mustard of Mechanicsburg, a farmer. Mr. and Mrs. Mustard had eight children — Marie, John C., Jr., Garland, Wayne, Josephine, Albert, Andrew and

Kermit. Since the death of her husband, Mrs. Mustard resides at Bland, Virginia.

Doctor Wagner, in his practice of medicine for 41 years and serving as Superintendent of Bland County Schools for 21 years, in addition to the civic duties that he performed and the interest that he took in the church, the Sunday Schools, the Men's Bible Class, the Singing Association, and the other Christian organizations earned for himself the rest under the shade of the tree of God.

The many beautiful tributes that have been paid to him and the large crowd of approximately 2,000 people who attended the funeral showed the esteem and love that the people of Bland County and other communities had for him.

His unselfishness, his integrity, and his forgiveness for those who trespassed against him in life made him the general that he was.

### DR. JASPER NEWTON WALKER

Jasper Newton Walker was born on Clear Fork, Bland County, September 7, 1866 and died at Bastian, Bland County, Virginia on April 8, 1938, having practiced as a physician and surgeon all his life in his native county. He was the son of Thomas F. and Julia Anne (Steel) Walker. The Steel family were early settlers of the Walkers Creek area and Julia Anne was the daughter of George and Emma (Robinett) Steel, who lived in the Clear Fork area;





their ancestors having been very early settlers of Walkers Creek. The Walker family was brought to America by Benjamin Stuart Walker, who was a descendant of the royal line of Stuart of England. He first settled in Monroe County, now West Virginia, near Peterstown. He and his son, Thomas Stuart Walker, who was ten years of age when the family came to America, moved to the Clear Fork area of Wolf Creek and were buried there. Thomas F. Walker, Doctor Walker's father, was born February 21, 1834 in Bland County and served as a lieutenant in Co. F, 36th Virginia Infantry in the Confederate Army. After returning home from the war he resumed his work as a farmer and stock raiser until his death December 2, 1885. Julia Anne was born March 21, 1837 and died February 11, 1889.

Jasper Newton Walker was reared in Bland County, attended the public schools and the Warthburg Seminary, and was graduated from the Medical Department of the University of Virginia in 1898. He established his office at Bland Court House and in 1916 moved to Bastian where he looked after a large community and country practice as a physician and surgeon. He was a farmer, a democrat, and a member of the Order of Elks. He was Secretary of the Board of Health for thirty-four years and served Bland and Giles Counties in the General Assembly in 1934-35. His hobbies were hunting and fishing. He married in Bland County Miss Bertie Olive Green, daughter of R. C. and Addie (McGruder) Green on November 1, 1907. Her father was a member of the Smyth Blues in the Confederate Army; afterward he operated a mill at Mechanicsburg, Virginia and farmed. R. C. Green died in 1916 and his wife in 1889.

## DR. ANDREW BANE WOOLWINE



Dr. Andrew Bane Woolwine was born on May 3, 1874 at Pearisburg, Virginia. His father was Charles Carrall Woolwine, a merchant originally of Christiansburg, Virginia, and his mother was Josephine Woodrum, reputedly at time the belle of Giles County.

He received his early education in a private school, Pearisburg Academy, and was graduated along with his brother, Dr. William David Woolwine, from the University College of Medicine, Richmond, Virginia in June, 1897.

He came to Ceres in December 1899 where he practiced medicine for forty-five years.

He was married on October 9, 1902 to Mary Ellen Groseclose of Ceres, Virginia. They had two children, Andrew Groseclose Woolwine, born in 1903, and Dorothy Candler Woolwine, born in 1913, and one grandchild, Mary Woodrum Jones Strailman, born in 1936.

He joined the Methodist Church as a child but later transferred his membership to the Sharon Presbyterian Church at Ceres where he was an officer and a trustee at the time of his death. He was, however, interested in all the churches of the community and frequently he invited the ministers of the various denominations to ride with him in making their pastoral calls.

He was a precinct chairman of the Democratic Party for years and declined the invitation to represent his party in the state legislature on more than one occasion.

Among his activities he served as a member of the Bland County School Board, President of the Bland County

Mutual Fire Insurance Company, County Health Officer and Worshipful Master of Ceres Lodge, A. F. and A. M. He was a member of the Southwestern Virginia Medical Society, the Virginia Medical Society and the American Society and, although he was never called, he volunteered for service during World War I.

For the first fifteen years of his practice he traveled on horseback or by horse and buggy. In 1914 he bought one of the first Ford cars in the county but often was unable to use it because of the condition of the roads at that time.

He was a conscientious family doctor, personally interested in every patient and dedicated to the principles of his profession. He never refused calls regardless of the patients' ability to pay, the state of the weather or the time of night or day. On the contrary, he packed his bag and shaved the last thing before retiring in order to respond promptly if needed in the night. His presence inspired confidence and, recognizing the importance of this, he stayed by his patients until he felt relief had been given.

During his long years of obstetrical practice, he delivered more than 2000 babies, often under extremely adverse circumstances. One time he remarked when he came home from a case that a one gallon stew kettle was all he had in which to heat water; and in another instance, the only assistance he had was from a teen-age boy, who managed to keep a supply of boiled water for his use. He took care of the mother, washed and dressed the baby without help. The neighboring women, who usually were glad to help the doctor, refused to come in this case because there was no papa for the baby.

He was a keen student of human nature, a perceptive person having the ability to see through subterfuge. He was endowed with a rare down-to-earth sense of humor and could aptly express a situation in a few words.

He was known throughout southwestern Virginia for his diagnostic ability which was developed, no doubt because he had to rely on himself alone. Following a heart attack he was advised by colleagues to take a complete rest more than ten years before he died. Practicing medicine, however, was second nature to him and he refused to take their advice. It was typical of him that he prescribed several times from his bed on the day of his death.

## DR. JAMES JOSEPH DAVIDSON



The ancestors of James Joseph Davidson bequeathed to him the stamina and endurance to fill the post of country doctor for nearly fifty years. He was born March 6, 1878 at the old Davidson home at South Gap, Bland County, Virginia. He was the son of Captain John Allen Davidson, of Co. H., 8th Va. Cavalry, Confederate Army, who was on duty at Appomattox when General Lee surrendered; and his mother was Martha Jane Harman Davidson. He was a descendant of John Goolman Davidson and

Henry Harman, Sr., noted Indian fighters and early pioneers of this area.

Dr. Davidson received his public school education at Rocky Gap, having had private tutors previously, then attended Sharon College for two years. He received his M. D. degree from the Medical College of Virginia in 1904 and began his practice in the coal fields of West Virginia where he remained for four years, then returned to Bland County and practiced here until his death on December 31, 1952. He was buried at the family cemetery at Tazewell, Virginia, with his wife and daughter who preceded him in death.

Dr. Davidson married Lena Mabel Grayson, daughter of Lucy Anne (McNutt) and James Floyd Grayson, merchant and farmer of Bland, and they had one daughter, Martha Elizabeth, who married Larry Rogerson of New York. They reared Levi H. (Pete) Sands as their son and he and his wife, Jean (Graves) Sands, reside at the home Dr. Davidson built at Rocky Gap in 1915.

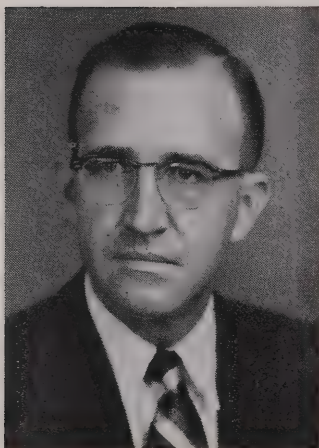
The doctor was actively engaged in farming during his life. He represented Bland and Giles Counties in the House of Delegates in 1940 and was a member of the Bland County Board of Supervisors for several years. He was a promoter of Route 21 through the county and worked hard to see this project completed.



He ranked high in his profession in the opinion of his patients and was noted for his skill in obstetrics, delivering over 3,000 babies. George Allen Thompson, M. D., Orlando, Florida, grandson of the doctor's brother, W. A. Davidson, inherited his Uncle Jim's skill in obstetrics.

Those of us who knew Dr. Davidson remember him as an outstanding man of his profession and although his manner was gruff, his heart was kind and sympathetic. The people of the community he served, since his death, have felt the void left in their midst by the last of the county doctors to serve and live at Rocky Gap.

### DR. GEORGE BARNARD KEGLEY



George Barnard Kegley was born February 12, 1913 at Bland, Virginia, the son of Fulton and Mary Jane (Hays) Kegley. His mother, Mary Jane Hays, was born at Chatham Hill, Smyth County, Virginia, the daughter of George W. and Niciti (Huffard) Hays. She was educated privately, by tutors, and attended Plummer College, Wytheville, Virginia. She taught at Sharon College for two years. It was much to her credit that George Kegley became a physician, since his father, Fulton Kegley, died while he was quite young. It

was the mother's responsibility that the education followed that of his paternal grandfather, Mitchell Kegley, who was also a physician and practiced in Bland County for many years.

Dr. George Kegley was educated in the public schools of Bland County, Bluefield College, and the University of Richmond. He received his Medical Degree from the University of Virginia in 1943 and went on to intern at the Medical College of the State of South Carolina in Roper Hospital at Charleston, South Carolina. During World War II, he was attached to the 103rd General Hospital in

the European Theatre and later with the Surgeon General's Office in Washington.

Virginia Dare Luter, daughter of John W. and Mary (Ellis) Luter of Holland, Virginia, became his wife on December 19, 1936. Mrs. Kegley is a graduate of the Medical College of Virginia School of Nursing. Dr. and Mrs. Kegley live at the site of the first Kegley home in Bland County. This was the site of the home of Issac Kegley, his great-grandfather, and is located one mile west of Bland.

Dr. Kegley is actively engaged in farming, is a leader in the Democratic Party, an Elder in the Leyburn Presbyterian Church and a Director of the Bank of Bland. He is a member of the Old Dominion Turnpike Authority, the Wythe-Bland Medical Society, the Southwestern Virginia Medical Society, the Medical Society of Virginia and the Southern Medical Association. He is the County Medical Examiner and Farm Physician for Bland Correctional Farm. Dr. Kegley was almost wholly responsible in causing the Bland County Health Department to be established.

Dr. and Mrs. Kegley have one son, George Barnard Kegley, III, who is at present a student at Augusta Military Academy, Staunton, Virginia. His desire is to become a physician.

### DR. JAMES LOVELL MUNCY

James Lovell Muncy, son of "Squire" Andrew Jackson and Sarah (Peery) Muncy, was born at the old Muncy home on Route 42 about 2 miles east of Bland. The original home, built of logs by Tunis and Rhoda (Simpkins) Muncy, was destroyed by fire in 1898. This home was one of the old homesteads of the county and the original owner of the large farm surrounding it was Holton Muncy, father of Tunis, who married Elsa Van Pelt. There was a log dwelling above the old home in which Tunis Muncy lived in his late years, and in which "Squire" Muncy taught school. "Squire", who lived to be 95 years of age, often made this statement, "I have lived my entire life in the same spot where I was born and reared; few others of the country can make such a statement." The present home was rebuilt on almost the exact location of the old home.



Dr. Muncy was named for Dr. James Lovell, who lived with Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Muncy. He attended the Medical College of Virginia, after receiving his public school education in Bland County. He married Matilda Peery and they were the parents of three sons; Jim, Blaine and Peery. Dr. Muncy practiced at Rocky Gap, Virginia, for about five years and then moved to Pearisburg, Virginia, where he continued to serve many of the Bland people until his death.

#### **DR. ORRIN KING PHLEGAR**

Dr. Orin King Phlegar was born in Newbern, Virginia, on May 5, 1876. His parents were Christina and Tazewell Phlegar and on both his father's and mother's side his genealogy traces back to the Revolution. He married Bertha Collins of Pearisburg, Virginia, and had two daughters, Gladys and Thelma. Gladys died when she was twelve.

He received his M.D. degree from the University College of Medicine in Richmond in 1906 and come to Crandon in 1907; stayed for about three years; then moved to Radford and thence to Bluefield, West Virginia. In Bluefield his humanitarian and unassuming approach to the practice of medicine made him a legend even in his own lifetime. He was deeply loved, too, in his few years in Bland. His specialty was obstetrics and he was very proud of the nearly four thousand babies he delivered.



Dr. Phlegar died in Bluefield, Virginia on January 29, 1961 at the age of 84, after practicing there since 1912.

### **DR. JAMES FRANKLIN REPASS**

James Franklin Repass, son of James Augustas and Lucinda Jane (Suiter) Repass, was born in a log house about seven miles west of Bland on Route 42, in Bland County, Virginia, December 2, 1869. At the age of sixteen he left home and went to Kentucky. He got a job in a drug store and while working there the manager influenced him to study medicine and work his way through college, which he did.

He was graduated from the University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky, in 1892 and first practiced in Nebraska. In 1895 he came back to Bland County and practiced here for several years. He rode horseback to see his patients and would stay several days if necessary until one passed the crisis. He married Ola Blanch Hugg in 1908 and they moved to Wythe County. He kept up his Bland practice by returning to make calls and by patients going to his office until the time of his death.

On October 18, 1948, he received his medal and recognition for more than fifty years of service. He passed away March 24, 1949, at his home in Wytheville, Virginia.



### **DR. P. P. HAYES**

An advertisement in the "Mountain Watchman" of Bland Court House dated September 23, 1886, published by John C. S. Green and Will F. Bowan stated: "P. P. Hayes, M. D., having permanently located at Bland Court House, Virginia, offers his professional services to the citizens of the town and surrounding county. Answers calls at all hours. Office on Main Street, East End of town." Dr. Hayes lived in what was known as the Bogle house in the Peterstown section of Bland. He is known to have attended several members of the family of Mr. R. C. Green.

### **DR. JAMES HARVEY BOGLE**

James Harvey Bogle, M.D., was born in 1868 near White Gate, in Bland County, Virginia, the son of John Lockhart and Julia Anne (Brawley) Bogle. He was graduated with honors in 1893 from the College of Physicians and Surgeons (now a part of Johns Hopkins University) at Baltimore, Maryland. He was married on October 7, 1896, to Della Claire Bailey of Rocky Gap, Virginia. He practiced in Bland and Giles Counties until 1906 when he moved to Roanoke, Virginia; moving from there to Florida for his health and practicing there until his death in 1923.

### **DR. JAMES H. HARE**

James H. Hare, M.D., practiced at Rocky Gap, Virginia, around 1890. He was a descendant of Joseph Hare, an early settler of the New River Valley and of Wolf Creek. He moved from Rocky Gap, Virginia, to Bluefield, West Virginia, and practiced there. Dr. Okey Hare is a son of Dr. James H. Hare.

### **DR. JAMES M. HAMILTON**

Dr. James M. Hamilton was practicing in Tennessee when his brother, William T. Hamilton, Clerk of The Court of Bland County, died and he was appointed to finish his term, May 28, 1880. They were the sons of Timothy

Hamilton, (who married a Miss Moore, of Mechanicsburg, Virginia), a farmer and blacksmith. Dr. Hamilton married Annie W. Mustard, daughter of Harvey R. and Mariah (Wohlford) Mustard and they had one son. Dr. Hamilton moved to Oklahoma, filed on some government land, and practiced there until his death.

#### **DR. ALBERT SIBOLD**

Dr. Albert Sibold practiced at Mechanicsburg, Virginia, about 1920. He first boarded with Mr. Tom McNeil and then lived in the property now owned by the Howard Walker family. He was from Giles County and his wife from Baltimore, Maryland. He practiced here for about two years.

#### **DR. JAMES MOORE**

Dr. James Moore came from Abbs Valley to Mechanicsburg, Virginia and remained to practice for about five or six years. He married Miss May Moss of Burkes Garden, who was a descendant of Sally (Mustard) and Hardin Moss.

#### **DR. THOMAS JEFFERSON HUGHES**

Dr. Thomas Jefferson Hughes came from Broadford, Virginia, and practiced at the village of Mechanicsburg for about a year. He had one child, Mr. Tom Hughes of television station WSLs at Roanoke, Virginia, who portrays "Uncle Looney". He was born while Dr. Hughes practiced near Ceres, Virginia.

#### **DR. WILBUR HALE**

Dr. Wilbur Hale resided and had his clinic in the property now owned by the John Stafford family in the latter 1920's and early 1930's. He moved to Pearisburg, Virginia, and he and his wife, who was a nurse, both died there.

### **DR. FRED THOMAS HOOSIER**

Dr. Fred Thomas Hoosier of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, was graduated from the Medical College of Virginia in 1933. He married Juanita Boyle Shannon, of Forest, Virginia. He practiced in Bland about 1935, moving to northern Virginia where he died shortly afterward.

### **DR. P. P. FERRARACCIO**

Dr. P. P. Ferraraccio practiced in Bland County for about one year in the 1940's. His office and residence were in the Bank of Bland building on the second floor. He is now located at Bluefield, Virginia.

### **DR. JAMES LOVELL**

Dr. James Lovell came to Bland and practiced in the 1860's. He first boarded with Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Muncy and later lived in the house occupied by Mr. T. E. Mallory. Records of the court house show that he was paid the sum of \$94.75 for medical services to the paupers of Bland County for the period from May, 1869 to May, 1870.

### **DR. ZEB VANCE SHERRILL**

Dr. Zeb Vance Sherrill was born in Caldwell County, North Carolina in 1862. He obtained his M.D. degree from the University of Kentucky and practiced in Bland County for about four years. He was a teacher in the St. Mathews Lutheran Sunday School and his home was where the John Stafford family lived. He went to Marion, Virginia, as first assistant physician at Southwestern State Hospital and later took up private practice at Marion. He died there in 1933 and was buried in the St. James Lutheran Church Cemetery at St. Clair's Bottom. His widow, Dr. Carolyn Sherrill, resides at Marion and one adopted son, Thomas Cole, lives in Maryland.

### **DR. ROBERT F. GILLESPIE**

Robert F. Gillespie, M.D., practiced at Bastian, Virginia, for several years. He was born at Pounding Mill, Tazewell County, Virginia, and married Mary Virginia Jessee.

### **DR. HARRY STEINBERG**

Dr. Harry Steinberg practiced in Bastian, Virginia, and was later killed in service during World War II.

### **DR. KARL E. WEIER**

Dr. Karl E. Weier was born in Flushing, New York, February 4, 1907 and came to Bastian, Virginia, after graduating from Michigan College in 1934. He served as a company physician, replacing Dr. John Roberts, and after two years joined the staff of Bluefield Sanitarium, Bluefield, West Virginia, where he has remained except for a four-year tour of duty in the U. S. Navy. He married Miss Alice J. Moran in Detroit, Michigan, and they have four children.

### **DR. S. C. WARNER**

S. C. Warner, M. D., practiced at Ceres, Virginia, during the years 1894-1898. He was reared at White Gate, Giles County, Virginia by Dr. Blackburn, who was often called into what is now Bland County. Dr. Warner attended the University College of Medicine of Richmond, Virginia. He married Blanche Repass, daughter of John and Minerva (Bruce) Repass of Bland County and died in 1898 in Ceres at the Hudson home.

### **DR. L. W. BRYAN**

L. W. Bryan, M. D., was born at Sevierville, Tennessee, November 1, 1854, and died at Bristol, Virginia November 12, 1926. He had been located in his profession there for twenty-two years. He was the father of Hettie, Rutherford, John and Joseph Bryan. He practiced for some years in the countryside village of Mahoney, Ceres, Virginia.

### **DR. E. A. HOLMES**

E. A. Holmes, M. D., was born September 29, 1873, in Tazewell County, Virginia. He was a graduate of the Medical Department of the University of Virginia and was a son of Major E. A. Holmes, C. S. A. He began his practice of medicine at Ceres, Virginia, later served as 1st Lt., Medical Department, U. S. A. until discharged to serve the



people of Broadford, Virginia. He married three times; Miss Gywn, Miss Buchanan and Margaret Moss, who is a descendant of Sallie (Mustard ) Moss, daughter of James Mustard and Sarah (Munsey) Mustard of Bland County.

### **DR. WILMER JOHNSON**

Wilmer Johnson, M. D., was the son of Rev. W. H. Johnson of Asbury College, Kentucky. He practiced at Ceres, Virginia, for about three years and moved to Spotsylvania County.

### **DR. JAMES E. TARTER**

James E. Tarter, M. D., was born March 14, 1857, and died May 31, 1921. He was the son of Elizah and Katherine (Baker) Tarter, of Wythe County, Virginia. Dr. Tarter attended school at Rural Retreat Academy under Professor Greever, then studied in Dr. Samuel Gleave's office before going to the Medical College of Virginia. He practiced first on Cripple Creek, Wythe County, returning home until his mother's death, and then, due to the influence of Judge Martin Williams, he came to Bland Court House. He remained in Bland about ten years, then went back to Wytheville, whence he continued to serve the people of our county.

He married Lettitia Virginia Gose, of Wythe County, and they were the parents of ten children, four of whom were born in Bland. His children were Mary Edith, Herman Gose, Susan Luella, Virginia Alberta, Annie Estelle, James E. (D. D. S.), Janie, John B., Martin A., and Edgar Hoge. He lived in the Charles Muncy home in Bland first, then in a brick house that stood on the street leading to the Methodist Church.

### **DR. JOHN CHANDLER DARST**

Dr. John Chandler Darst practiced in Bland in the 1890's, moving to Roanoke, Virginia, from Bland. He lived in the brick house formerly occupied by Dr. Tarter. It later burned.

### **DR. HEATH A. DALTON**

Heath A. Dalton, M. D., was born at Hillsville, Virginia, on April 21, 1889, attended the public schools there and then attended Virginia Polytechnic Institute. He was graduated from the Medical College of Virginia in 1914 and, after practicing at Galax, Virginia, moved to Bland and established his office in the Newberry Building. He married Hattie Burnette of Willis, Virginia, and they had two children, Heath A. Jr. and Harold C.

### **DR. CARY D. ALLEN**

Dr. Cary D. Allen, son of John Allen and grandson of Madison and Maria (Bane) Allen, served with the U. S. Navy as a doctor and upon his retirement settled at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. He was born and reared in Bland County in the area adjoining Giles County on the Madison Allen farm.

### **DR. MILLER SHANNON ALLEN**

Miller Shannon Allen, M. D., University Hospital, Charlottesville, Virginia, is the son of Miller Shannon (Yock) and Ethel (Bird) Allen and is a descendant of Madison and Maria (Bane) Allen. He was born and reared in Bland County and his home was located where the Superintendent of Bland Correctional Farm now lives.

Although Dr. Cary Allen and Dr. Shannon Allen did not practice in the county, their ancestors figured prominently in the early settlement and formation of the county.

### **DR. ANDREW MUNCY GROSECLOSE**

Andrew Muncy Groseclose, M. D., born and reared in Bland County, was the son of Simon Kent and Sarah Josephine (Muncy) Groseclose. He has been one of the most prominent obstetricians of Roanoke, Virginia, for many years. Although he did not practice in the county, he has always been ready to offer a helping hand to the

people here and many of our children were born in Roanoke under the expert care of Dr. Groseclose. His ancestors were early settlers of this region.

## DENTISTS OF BLAND COUNTY

Bland County has had three resident dentists since its formation. Traveling dentists who did their work in the home or any convenient place served the people. Listed are a few of the newspaper advertisements inserted by these men.

THE BLAND REPORTER, August 30, 1901

Dr. E. W. Umberger, Surgeon-Dentist

Office hours 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Will be in Ceres from 3rd Monday  
until following Saturday of each month.

Office over post office, Wytheville, Va.

THE SOUTHWEST, January 22, 1898

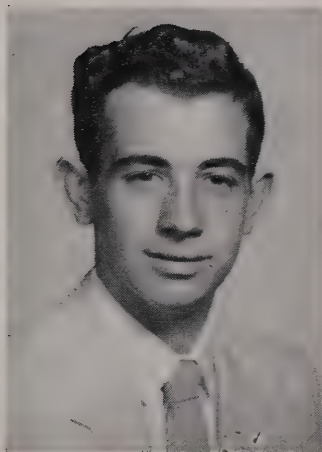
Dr. W. H. Dunigan  
DENTIST

Shammer Mill, Virginia

I will attend Bland County Courts regularly for the purpose of doing any work in my line. All work guaranteed to give satisfaction. I respectfully solicit the patronage of the public.

One of the most prominent and best remembered of the traveling dentists was Dr. Thomas Cundiff. He was from Floyd, Virginia, and he came to Bland in the early 1900's.

## WALTER ROBERT DILLOW, JR., D.D.S.



Bland County can proudly boast that we have a resident dentist for the first time in about fifty years. W. R., as he known to the people of the county, is the son of Walter R. and Virginia (Painter) Dillow of Bland, and was born here October 24, 1935. He is a graduate of Bland High School, Class of 1953. He attended Bluefield College for two years, transferring to the University of Virginia, and from there he attended the Medical College of Virginia Dental School at Richmond, Virginia, where he received his D. D. S. degree in

June of 1960. He opened his office on Jackson Street in the town of Bland in July of 1960. His sister, Norma Leigh Dillow, is his capable assistant.

W. R. is the product of an intelligent mind, an ambitious nature, and ability to work hard toward a goal set by himself in his boyhood. He worked during his high school days at whatever job he could find and this drive continued throughout his college years. He is a member of the American Dental Association, XI PSI PHI and PSI THETA KAPPA fraternities, Bland Kiwanis Club and in politics, is a Republican. He is the dentist for Bland Correctional Farm.

Dr. Dillow's father, Walter R. Dillow, is the son of Miller and Hester (Davis) Dillow and his mother, Virginia, is the daughter of Alice (Burton) Painter and the late Stuart Painter.

## WILLIAM C. BERRY, D.D.S.

William C. Berry, D. D. S., was born and reared in Washington County, Virginia. He practiced in Bland from 1892 until 1897 and died in Plano, Texas, in 1899. He was



married on December 21, 1892, to Roxie Thompson, daughter of Albert Newton and Juliana Harriet (Bird) Thompson. Juliana Thompson was born in Franklin County, Virginia, a daughter of Rev. B. T. Bird and Arrena (Oxley) Bird.

Albert K. Thompson, son of Albert Newton and Juliana (Bird) Thompson practiced denistry in Bland County for about one year. He was educated in Baltimore, Maryland, and died in Maryland on December 1, 1919. He was known to his friends as "K". His father, A. N. Thompson, was the son of Joshua and Esther (Smith) Thompson of the Point Pleasant community. Joshua was the son of Amos, and Amos the son of Andrew, who came from Ireland to America in colonial days; fought for American Independence in the Continental Army; and finally settled on land east of Bland Court House where he entered 1600 acres, the first record being a survey on Walkers Creek dated February 20, 1783. Mr. Cicero Thompson resides on a part of the original survey, 275 acres. Dr. Herbert Thompson of Bluefield, West Virginia, was a brother of "K." Thompson.

Twenty-seven of the descendants of Andrew Thompson saw service in the Confederate Army during the War Between the States.

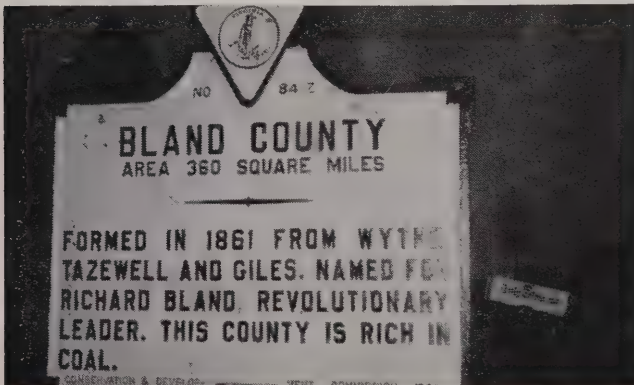
## CHAPTER V

### BIRTH OF BLAND COUNTY

The first legislative assembly of English-speaking people in the Western hemisphere was held on July 30, 1619, in the church at Jamestown, Virginia. This assembly was patterned after the English Parliament and became the model followed by all succeeding British colonies.

In 1621 the Governor was authorized to call a meeting once a year, which was to be called the General Assembly, for the purpose of initiating the policy for the form of government, laws, customs and other administration of justice as used in England. At the same time Governor Wyatt was ordered to make arrangements for dividing the colony into cities and boroughs. In this same year, inferior courts were opened in convenient places to relieve the Governor and Council of the burden of business and to make justice more accessible and less expensive. This was the foundation of our county courts, although there were no counties laid off at that time.

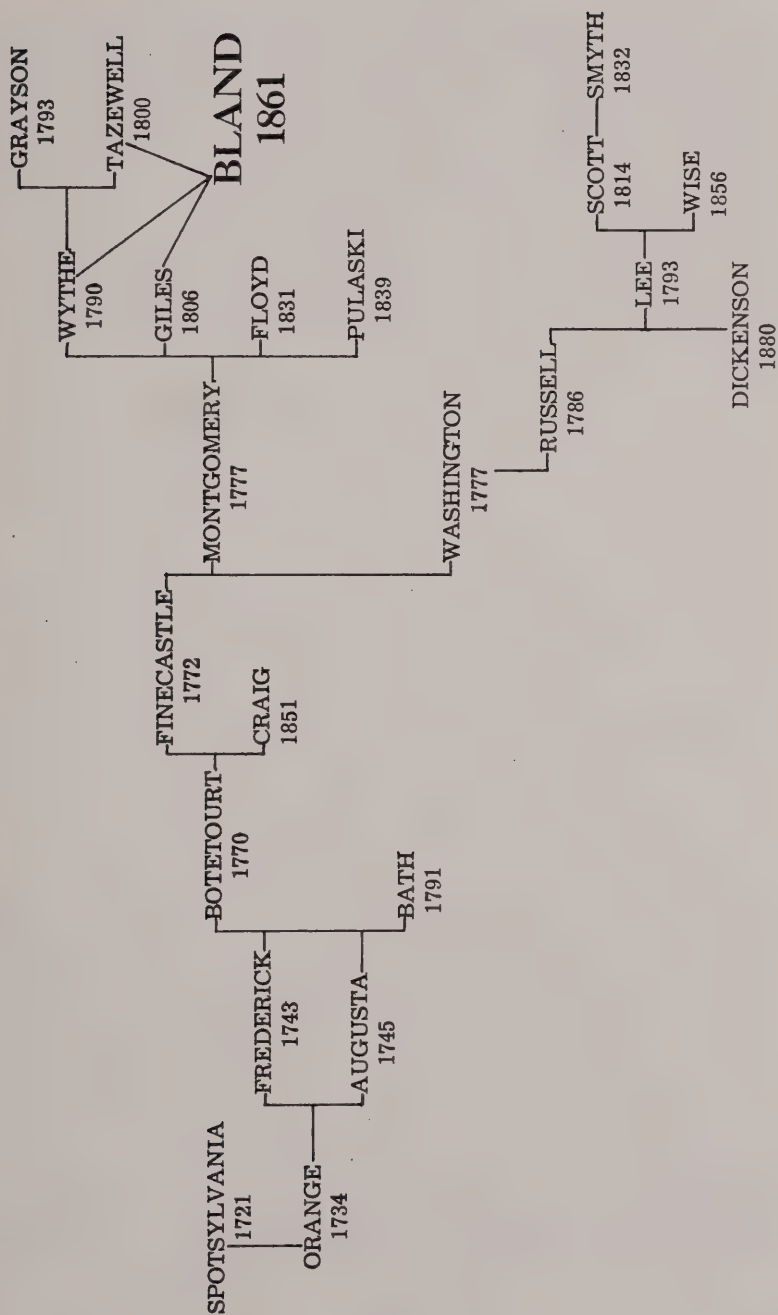
Although the first division of the colony was into shires as designated by the General Assembly, they were thereafter called counties. Very liberal land laws were enacted and new counties formed as inducements to attract settlers west of the Alleghenies and beyond New River.



*[Faint, illegible handwritten text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]*

NOTICE :

Photostatic copy of notice of application made to the  
Legislature of Va.:





Our own county of Bland was formed from necessity and popular demand. The people became dissatisfied with the inconvenience of traveling over long mountain trails to other counties to transact legal affairs, and, too, they were unhappy over taxes they paid for the upkeep of other counties. As a result of this dissatisfaction and the growing population in this area, there was a demand for local government supported by local revenue. Thus, an act to form a new county was passed on March 31, 1861, by the General Assembly. This county was formed from portions of Giles, Wythe and Tazewell Counties and was named Bland in honor of Richard Bland of Revolutionary War fame.

## THE BIRTH OF BLAND

(Acts of the General Assembly of the State of Virginia  
Passed in 1861 in the Eighty-Fifth Year of the  
Commonwealth)

CHAPTER 23. — An ACT to Establish the County of  
Bland Out of Parts of Giles, Wythe  
and Tazewell. Passed March 30,  
1861..

1. Be it enacted by the General Assembly, that so much of the Counties of Wythe, Tazewell and Giles, as is contained within the following lines, to wit—beginning on the top of Walker's Little Mountain, at the line between Wythe and Pulaski, to the top of Walker's Big Mountain; thence eastward along the top of said last mentioned mountain, to a point opposite the mouth of Kimberling creek; thence by a line northward, passing through the mouth of said Kimberling creek, to a point on the top of the mountain, which lies south of Wolf creek, three miles east of the present county line between Giles and Tazewell counties; thence to a point on the top of East River mountain, two miles east of the present county line between Giles and Tazewell, so as to include the homestead of Madison Allen, and his lands adjoining thereto; thence

to the top of said East River Mountain, westward, to a point two miles west of George Steel's house on Clear Fork; thence across and by a line as near as may be at right angles to the course of the valley between, to the top of Rich mountain, and westward, along the top of said Rich Mountain, so far as to include the settlement of Wolf Creek; thence across the top of Garden mountain; thence along the top of said Garden Mountain, to a point through which the line between Wythe and Smyth would pass if prolonged; thence by said prolonged line, to the said line between Wythe and Smyth, and by the said last mentioned line, to the top of Walker's Big Mountain, thence eastward with the top of said Walker's Big Mountain, to a point opposite the head waters of Walker's Little Creek; thence across the top of Walker's Little Mountain; thence with the top of said mountain, eastward, to the beginning — be and the same is hereby established as a new county; which shall be known by the name of Bland.

2. The following persons, James W. English of the county of Giles, Samuel Cecil of the county of Tazewell, and Robert Gibboney of the county of Wythe, and any two of whom may act, shall be and are hereby appointed commissioners to select the site for a courthouse, jail and other public buildings for said county of Bland, and are hereby required to meet, within the limits of said new county, on the second Monday in April next, or within ten days thereafter, and within ten days after their meeting, ascertain and determine at what point and place within the limits of said new county, it is most suitable and proper to erect a courthouse, and such other necessary public buildings and fixtures as the convenience of the county requires, under existing law, for holding courts and conducting businesses incident thereto; and shall lay off, in the most convenient form, a lot or lots of land for that purpose, not exceeding two acres in quantity, and shall ascertain the value thereof; whereupon, the said commissioners, or a majority of them acting in this behalf, shall make this report in writing to the county court of said Bland county, when organized, of the manner in which they shall execute the duties required of them by this act, and of their proceedings in relation thereto, designating the point or place agreed upon, the value of the lot or lots of land, and name or names of the owners thereof; and the place so ascertained and determined upon by the said commissioners, or a majority of them, shall be the permanent place for holding the

courts of the county of Bland, now required by law to be holden for the several counties of this commonwealth. And the court of the county of Bland thereupon provide for the payment of the valuation of the said lot or lots of land so ascertained in the manner now required by law, where lands shall not be already provided and appropriated for that purpose.

3. The commissioners shall be allowed a compensation each of three dollars per diem for their services aforesaid, to be provided for by county levy made in the said county of Bland.

4. The following persons, to wit, John W. Tracy, Jesse Justice, Joseph Fanning, John Mustard, Thomas Shannon, George Robinet and Isaac Kegley, are hereby appointed commissioners, to meet on the land indicated by the commissioners named in the second section of this act, for the erection of the courthouse of the county of Bland, on the third Monday in April next, or within five days thereafter, and lay off the said county of Bland into four magisterial districts, select points at which elections shall be holden in each district, and appoint for each a conductor and five commissioners, and three of whom may act, to superintend the elections to be holden for the said county of Bland, on the fourth Thursday in May next.

5. It shall be the duty of all persons residing within the limits of the said county of Bland, who are now entitled to vote for members of the General Assembly, to attend at the respective election precincts, so selected by the commissioners aforesaid, on the fourth Thursday in May next, and elect a sheriff, a clerk of the county court, a clerk of the circuit court, a commissioner of the revenue, a commonwealth's attorney and a surveyor for the said county of Bland. And the voters residing in each magisterial district shall elect for that district four justices of the peace, one overseer of the poor and one constable. The election of the justices of the peace shall be certified to the governor of this commonwealth by the several conductors and commissioners conducting and superintending said elections, who, after they shall be commissioned and qualified according to law, shall meet on the lands selected for the public buildings of said county, on the fourth Monday in the next month after that in which they shall be so commissioned, and a majority of them being present, shall fix upon a place in said county of Bland for holding the courts

of said county until the necessary buildings shall be constructed on the site designated by the commissioners aforesaid.

6. The said justices shall, at the first term of the county court of said county, choose one of their own body, who shall be presiding justice of the county court, and whose duty it shall be to attend each term of said court.

7. The commissioners and conductors of the elections aforesaid shall certify to the said county court of Bland, at its first term, or at some subsequent term, as soon as practicable, the election of said clerks of the county and circuit courts, commonwealth's attorney, surveyor and commissioner of the revenue, who shall, after having given bond and security, and being qualified by law, enter upon and discharge the duties of their offices respectively.

8. The term of the office of the commissioner of the revenue for the said county of Bland shall commence on the first day of February eighteen hundred and sixty two; and the commissioners of the revenue of the counties of Giles, Tazewell and Wythe are hereby required each to discharge the duties of his office in the limits of so much said new county as was taken from his county, for the year eighteen hundred and sixty one, and are hereby directed each to keep the lists taken by him in the said county of Bland, separate and distinct from the lists of his own county, and make return of them in the manner now provided by law, in the same manner as if appointed commissioner of the revenue for the said county of Bland.

9. And it shall be the duty of the second auditor to re-apportion the fixed and surplus school quotas of the counties of Giles, Tazewell and Wythe for the next fiscal year, between said counties respectively, and the new county of Bland, agreeable to the number of white tithables which may be returned therein by the commissioner of the revenue for eighteen hundred and sixty one.

10. It shall be the duty of the sheriffs respectively of the counties of Giles, Tazewell and Wythe, to collect and make distress for any public dues or officers' fees which may remain unpaid by the inhabitants of the portions of said counties taken respectively from the said counties of Giles, Tazewell and Wythe, at the time when this act shall commence and be in force; and they each shall be accountable for the same in like manner as if this act had never passed.



11. The courts of the counties of Giles, Tazewell and Wythe shall respectively retain jurisdiction of all actions and suits depending before them on the fourth Monday in July next, and shall try and determine the same, and award execution thereon, except cases wherein both parties reside within the new county; which, together with the papers, shall after that day be removed to the courts of the county of Bland, and there be tried and determined.

12. The said county of Bland shall be in and attached to the sixteenth judicial circuit; and the circuit court thereof shall be holden on the third Monday in April and September in every year; and the first circuit court of the county of Bland shall be holden on the third Monday after the fourth Monday in September next.

13. The persons subject to military duty within the limits of said county of Bland, shall hereafter constitute a separate regiment, to be organized according to existing laws, and attached to the twenty-fifth brigade.

14. The respective portions of the said county of Bland, taken respectively from the counties of Giles, Tazewell and Wythe, shall remain attached to the electoral, congressional and senatorial districts respectively to which said last mentioned counties belong, and shall vote with said last mentioned counties respectively for a member or members of the house of delegates.

15. The county courts of said county shall be holden on Thursday after the second Monday of each month, and the courts of quarterly sessions of the said county of Bland shall be holden in the months of February, May, July and October.

16. The surveyor hereafter elected for the county of Bland in the mode prescribed by law, together with the surveyor of Wythe, shall run and mark the lines between the said county of Bland, and the coterminous counties of Giles and Tazewell, Smyth and Wythe, agreeably to the provisions of the seventh section of the forty-seventh chapter of the Code of Virginia.

18. Be it further enacted that the citizens of the part of Tazewell County which shall be embraced in the said county of Bland, shall not be exonerated from, but shall be still liable for the payment of levies and taxes for roads construction or under contract in that part of said county

of Bland taken from said county of Tazewell, as if said county of Bland had not been formed, and that said taxes and levies shall be collected by the sheriff of Bland county. And that the county courts of the said counties of Wythe, Tazewell and Giles respectively are hereby authorized to lay the levies for the purposes aforesaid, at the time of the levying the taxes respectively by them upon the citizens of their counties.

19. The commissioners appointed by this act to lay off the said county into magisterial districts shall each be allowed two dollars for every day that they shall be actively in the duties aforesaid, to be provided for and paid out of the county levy of said county.

20. The first county court for the county of Bland shall be holdren on the Thursday after the second Monday in August next.

21. This act shall be in force from its passage.

### **BLAND COUNTY NAMED FOR REVOLUTIONARY PATRIOT, RICHARD E. BLAND**

Richard E. Bland was born May 6, 1710, at Jordan's Point, Prince George County, Virginia. He was educated in private schools and was graduated from the College of William and Mary. He was one of the many prominent Virginians who advocated the Revolution and who led the Virginia Colony into rebellion against Great Britain. Because of his thorough and accurate knowledge of the history of the colony, he was known as "The Virginian Anti-quary." His literary genius and writings gave expression to theories of colonial prerogative that no longer suggested dependency upon the Mother Country but asserted a sense of partnership in the British Empire. This spirit is exemplified by a tablet upon the wall of William and Mary College to Richard Bland, who in 1764 was "the first to announce in a formal pamphlet that England and the American Colonies were coordinate kingdoms under a common crown. Thus, by more than a century and a half, Richard Bland anticipated the conclusion announced by the representatives of the British "Commonwealth of Nations." Richard Bland, on April 18, 1774, presented an "Enquiry into the Rights of the British Colonies." Because of this paper he is entitled to high credit since he

was the first to argue in public print that, though Virginia was a component part of the British Empire, she was no part of the Kingdom of England since the Colony had been settled by Englishmen under sanction of the Crown and she was not dependent upon Parliament. The Colony owed existence and allegiance to the Crown only.

Although Richard E. Bland was a most ungraceful speaker in debate, he was a profound logician and the best writer of the period. Thomas Jefferson rated him "the wisest man South of James River."

Richard E. Bland was a member of the House of Burgesses from 1742 until 1775. In 1775, he was chosen by the Virginia Convention as one of eleven men who composed the Committee of Safety that was in effect the governing body until the Constitution was adopted in June of 1776. Although a conservative, he was sent to the Continental Congresses of 1774 and 1775 but resigned because of ill health.

He died at Williamsburg while walking on the street on October 26, 1776, from an attack of apoplexy. At the time of his death he was attending the first meeting of the Legislature, in which he represented his native county of Prince George.

### **JAMES ALEXANDER SEDDON**

The town of Bland was once called Seddon and so named in honor of James Alexander Seddon. Seddon Magisterial District was thus named in honor of Seddon, the American Statesman.

James Alexandria Seddon was born at Falmouth, Virginia, on July 13, 1815. He was graduated from the law school of the University of Virginia and practiced law in Richmond. He was a Democratic member of Congress in 1845-47 and 1849-51 after which he retired to his estate. In February 1861, he was one of five delegated to the Peace Congress at Washington where he maintained the right of a state to peaceful secession. In July 1861, he was a delegate from Virginia to the Confederate Provisional Congress and in November, 1862, became Secretary of War in the Confederate cabinet under Jefferson

Davis as President. He held this position until the Civil War was nearly over, resigning on January 28, 1865, and retiring from public life.

## ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING OF COUNTY OFFICIALS — AUGUST 15, 1861

Be it remembered that John R. Compton, John W. Harman, Madison Allen, Albert G. Updyke, William E. Hoge, John C. Shannon, John L. Locke, James A. Repass, Thomas Shannon, William Groseclose, Eli F. Groseclose, William M. Bishop, Peter C. Honaker, Thomas N. Kinzer and Stephen Gose produced a commission from the Governor of Virginia whereby the foregoing men are commissioned as justices of the peace within and for the County of Bland, and where upon Thomas Shannon, being the senior Justice, administered the oaths as required by law to the Justices above named and the oaths of office and other oaths prescribed were then taken by the said Thomas Shannon before William Groseclose, a member of the Court, and the said justices entered upon the duties of their office.

John W. Tracey, who has been duly elected Clerk of this Court, came in and took the several oaths prescribed by law and together with Peter C. Honaker, William M. Bishop and Thomas N. Kinzer, his securities, entered into and acknowledged a bond in the penalty of ten thousand dollars which bond is ordered to be delivered to the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Bland and a copy certified to the first auditor; therefore the said John W. Tracey is declared as Clerk and entered upon the duties of his office.

The following men, being duly elected, were sworn in and took the oaths of office as prescribed by law:

Surveyor of Bland County, William G. Mustard; Commissioner of the Revenue, Franklin Suiter; Sheriff, Samuel N. Newberry; Deputy Sheriff, Harman Newberry; Attorney for the Commonwealth, William N. Harman; Justice of the Peace, William Groseclose; Overseers of the Poor, Randolph Hall and Joseph Fanning.

The Court appropriated the sum of fifteen hundred and seventy-two dollars to be expended for the use of the volunteers in the Civil War from Bland County and appointed Augusta Weisendock as commissioner to negotiate



a loan for the said amount and the Clerk of this Court is directed to give bond for such amount as said commissioner may require for the purpose.

The Court appointed John W. Tracey, Clerk of the Court, to have the house of James W. Grayson, now occupied as a court house fitted up for the use of the Court and Clerks and report an account of the charges therefor to the Court.

Signed  
W. Groseclose, Justice of the Peace

### **PLEAS BEFORE THE COUNTY COURT OF BLAND, SEPTEMBER 12, 1861**

It was ordered that the Court lay off the County into School Districts which shall be the same as the now Magisterial Districts and to appoint in each District a school commissioner as follows: First District, Thomas Shannon; Second District, A. J. Munsey; Third District, William P. Mustard; Fourth District, William P. Mustard.

### **COURT HOUSE**

A site was selected for the Court House upon the formation of the county and the land was donated by James Wayne and Emily (Steel) Grayson in 1862. Due



to the reconstruction period in the South following the Civil War, plans were not drawn for its construction until 1871. Court was held until this time in the store-house owned by Mr. Grayson, and formerly occupied by John C. Shannon, which stood across the street from the present Court House. Locke and Thompson, contractors, were given the contract on February 10, 1871, to have the building completed by January 1, 1872, at a cost of \$9,497.00. The plans were revised and new plans required an additional \$1,300.00. On October 22, 1874, the new Court House was accepted by the County Board of Supervisors.

The building was of brick, laid on a stone foundation, and was very similar to the front section of the Court House now in use. Specifications were made as to thickness of walls, size of rooms, types of materials and roofing. The bar in the court room was to be made of good walnut, as were the jury benches. Venetian blinds were to be installed at all the windows; stone door sills and door steps were to be used. The walls were to be well plastered and a fire place in each clerk's office. In 1875 it was directed that J. G. Kegley be authorized to take charge of and rent the four law offices on the first floor. In 1877 D. W. Dunn was made agent for renting offices in the Court House. In 1877 it was ordered by the Board of Supervisors that from this date, no meeting or public worship or other assemblies will be held at night in the Court House; and that after the 15th of June, 1877, the Court House would be opened for court or for general purpose only. John M. Hicks was authorized to purchase a bell for the Court House in 1873. On June 19, 1873, a contract for a fence around the public square was given to John Wilkenson for \$338.00. In 1882, the Court House lot was rented to W. Dunlap for \$4.00 for the year to pasture one horse during the day, Dunlap to be responsible for any damages. In 1883 the Board made contract and agreement with S. W. Williams that "in consideration of the sum of \$5.00 to be paid to the order of the Board of Supervisors for the benefit of Bland County, the Board grants to S. W. Williams the right and privilege to erect and keep law office on the southeast corner of public square. In twenty years he may renew or remove the building." This building was used for a number of years as the office of the Commonwealth Attorney and was sold in 1960 to Mr. Robert Hylton. He moved it to a lot behind the Court House and it is now a part of his new home.

In 1885, C. P. Muncy was given a twenty-year lease for a law office on the northeast corner of the square; however, this building was never erected.

On December 5, 1888, at night, the Court House burned; fortunately, most of the records and valuable papers were saved. James L. Corder received the contract to rebuild the Court House at \$6,973.00 and the new structure was finished in 1889. The brick walls of the new building were laid on the old foundation except there was a new rock wall laid across the front of the vestibule in the same manner and style as the other foundation. The specifications for the new building were similar to the original except that the rooms below the Court Room were not to be finished on the inside until deemed expedient to do so. The vault room was used by the County Clerk until a committee consisting of T. N. Finley, A. L. Newberry, R. C. Repass, Fulton Kegley and George T. Bird was appointed to see to the completion of these rooms. D. W. Dunn and B. C. Banks were appointed to supervise the construction. The Bank of Bland occupied the office now used by the County Treasurer for a few years. Maple trees were planted in the square shortly after the erection of the second building.

The portico in existence today was installed in 1929 and W. S. Dunn, M. L. Greever and G. R. Repass were on the committee to see to its erection. The public square was enclosed by a plank fence with a large stile at the front entrance until 1909 when a committee consisting of A. R. Porterfield, R. C. Repass and George L. Robinett was appointed to select and see to the installation of an iron picket fence. The iron fence was used until 1959 when a cable and post fence was installed. In the winter of 1935-36 the town of Bland acquired a public water system and water was installed in the Court House. The same winter Hobart N. Grubb received the contract to install a central heating plant at a cost of \$1,787.50.

In August of 1911, the Local Daughters of the Confederacy dedicated the Confederate Monument on the Court House lawn. The following committee saw to the erection of the Thomas J. Muncy Monument: L. P. Summers, Chairman; Mrs. R. C. Repass, Treasurer; Mrs. Eva T. Hassinger, R. W. Dickenson, R. C. Repass, R. E. Chase, L. B. Howard, H. G. McCall, H. B. Crockett, J. F. Richmond, G. F. Cook,

A. M. Miller, S. R. Hurley, W. B. Snidow, J. K. Taggart, and J. W. McGavock.

The new addition to the Court House was completed in 1949 by local craftsmen under the direction of Mr. Eugene Morehead. This addition consisted of nine offices, four rest rooms, stairway and basement housing a new heating plant and two store rooms. The Court Room was renovated and the old section of the lower floor was fire-proofed. Cement floors were laid in the downstairs floors and tile was laid throughout the building.

## COUNTY JAIL

James V. Pendleton made contract with the Justices of the County of Bland on August 29, 1866, to build a jail for Bland County on the site to be designated by the Jail Committee, of which Squire A. J. Muncy was a member, for the sum of \$4,700.00 in currency. Pendleton was to furnish all the materials and workmanship in accordance with specifications agreed upon and accepted by the Jail Committee. Payments were to be made in installment fashion, commensurate with the progress of the construction of the building.



This structure, still in use today as the residence of the county sheriff, who also acts as jailor, consists of a two-story brick building with jail cells on the second floor. The jailor lives on the first floor.



The new jail which was built in 1953 by Associated Contractors, Inc., at a cost of \$23,250, joins the old building and consists of six cells with toilet facilities. Three of the cells can be closed off from the others. There is a waiting room and shower in front of the cells.

## BLAND COUNTY OFFICIALS — 1861-1961

### Clerk

John W. Tracy .....	1861-1865
F. F. Repass .....	1865-1871
William T. Hamilton .....	1871-1880
James M. Hamilton .....	1880-1881
W. H. Crawford .....	1881-1885
C. P. Muncy .....	1885-1899
R. C. Repass .....	1899-1927
G. R. Repass .....	1927-1960
A. W. Newberry .....	1960-

### Commonwealth's Attorney

William N. Harman .....	1861-1870
Walter H. Robertson .....	1870-1875
S. W. Williams .....	1875-1887
Thomas J. Munsey .....	1887-1899
F. Kegley .....	1899-1901
T. M. Muncy .....	1901-1904
T. J. Muncy .....	1904-1910
A. R. Porterfield .....	1910-1916
S. W. Williams, Jr. ....	1916-1924
W. S. Dunn .....	1924-1952
Sam L. Hardy .....	1952-1956
David E. Repass .....	1956-1960
Sam L. Hardy .....	1960-

### Sheriff

Samuel H. Newberry .....	1861-1863
Harmon Newberry .....	1863-1865
John C. Stowers .....	1865-1867
F. I. Suiter .....	1867-1869
A. C. Waggoner .....	1869-1870
Eli F. Groseclose .....	1870-1874
Franklin I. Suiter .....	1874-1875

J. Gordon Kegley .....	1875-1883
Gordon Wohlford .....	1883-1887
J. W. Thorn .....	1887-1895
W. T. McNutt .....	1895-1903
John A. McNutt .....	1903-1904
G. W. Stowers .....	1904-1912
E. N. Wylie .....	1912-1916
T. D. Hubble .....	1916-1920
W. A. Waddle .....	1920-1924
Henry G. Helvey .....	1924-1928
R. V. Blankenship .....	1928-1932
Minor Muncy .....	1932-1936
J. H. Kinser .....	1936-1944
W. M. Price .....	1944-1956
W. K. Compton .....	1956-

1871: Ordered that the Board of Supervisors let a contract to build a new Court House for Bland County. Sealed bids will be received for the contract of said building on February 6, 1871.

February 6, 1871, Board of Supervisors: After due consideration, it is in order that the contract to build the Court House at Seddon, Bland County, be given to John F. Locke and A. N. Thompson for \$9,497.00.

### Board of Supervisors

(Chairmen named first)

1871  
 Samuel H. Newberry  
 A. G. Updike  
 J. S. Robinett  
 William M. Bishop  
 Harmon Newberry

1872  
 Samuel H. Newberry  
 Harmon Newberry  
 William M. Bishop  
 J. S. Robinett

1873  
 J. A. Repass  
 J. M. Stowers  
 Thomas H. Kinser  
 T. K. Price

1874  
 James A. Repass  
 James S. Robinett  
 James M. Stowers  
 Thomas H. Kinser

1875  
 Thomas H. Kinser  
 James M. Stowers  
 James S. Robinett  
 James A. Repass

1875-1876  
 Thomas H. Kinser  
 James A. Repass  
 J. H. Bruce  
 J. M. Hamilton

# 1877

Thomas K. Kinser  
James A. Repass  
J. Henderson Bruce  
Isaac S. Harman

# 1878

J. Henderson Bruce  
Isaac S. Harman  
James A. Repass  
James D. Honaker

# 1879

James D. Honaker  
Hiram Hall  
S. P. Mustard  
I. G. Pauley

# 1880

James D. Honaker  
Samuel P. Mustard  
Isaac G. Pauley  
Hiram Hall

# 1881

J. D. Honaker  
Samuel P. Mustard  
Isaac G. Mustard  
Ganam Kitts

# 1882

S. P. Mustard  
Isaac G. Pauley  
Ganam Kitts  
William Terry

# 1883

S. P. Mustard  
I. G. Pauley  
Ganam Kitts  
R. M. Ashworth

# 1883-1885

R. M. Ashworth  
H. C. Fanning  
B. D. Graves  
John Repass

# 1885-1887

A. J. Grayson  
H. C. Fanning  
Elias Foglesong  
D. M. Bailey

# 1888

Elias Foglesong  
H. C. Fanning  
W. W. Bird  
D. M. Bailey

# 1889

E. Foglesong  
G. C. Bailey  
H. C. Fanning  
W. W. Bird

# 1890

G. C. Bailey  
E. Foglesong  
H. C. Fanning  
W. W. Bird

# 1891

G. C. Bailey  
H. C. Fanning  
J. G. Muncy  
J. S. McNutt

# 1892

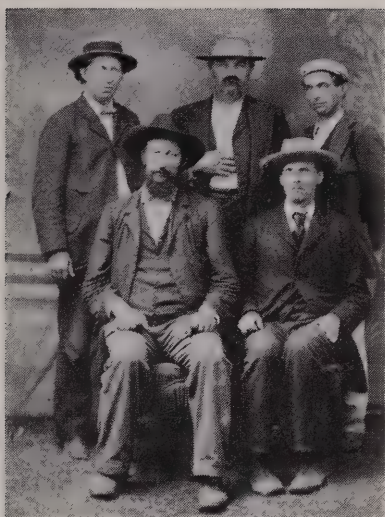
G. C. Bailey  
H. C. Fanning  
J. G. Muncy  
J. S. McNutt  
J. J. Kimberling

# 1893-1895

D. M. Bailey  
H. E. Peery  
S. P. Newberry  
George T. Bird

# 1896

George T. Bird  
B. P. McFarlane  
D. M. Bailey  
S. P. Newberry



# **BLAND COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**YEARS 1899-1900**

**SEATED, LEFT TO RIGHT:**  
Christopher Foglesong, Leo-  
nard F. Morehead, **STAND-**  
**ING:** Raymond Repass,  
Grandeur Thompson and  
Sam Robinett.

## **1897-1898**

B. P. McFarlane  
T. E. French  
L. F. Morehead  
Giles H. Burton

## **1899-1900**

Grandeur Thompson  
L. F. Morehead  
S. B. Robinett  
Christopher Foglesong

## **1901-1902**

H. G. Hicks  
C. Foglesong  
Phillip Wohlford  
N. A. Bruce

## **1903-1904**

C. Foglesong  
L. P. Wohlford  
N. A. Bruce  
H. G. Hicks

## **1904**

John W. Burton  
S. B. Robinett  
C. A. Umbarger  
G. W. Hart

## **1905-1908**

John W. Burton  
D. W. Dunn  
C. A. Umbarger  
G. W. Hart

## **1908-1912**

J. W. Burton  
W. J. Blankenship  
C. A. Umbarger  
H. G. Thompson

## **1912-1916**

John W. Burton  
A. N. Thompson  
C. A. Umbarger  
J. D. Honaker

## **1916-1920**

S. B. Robinett  
C. A. Umbarger  
J. J. Davidson  
John W. Burton

## **1920-1924**

John W. Burton  
W. A. Newberry  
C. A. Crabtree  
J. J. Davidson



**1924-1928**

John W. Burton  
 W. A. Newberry  
 C. A. Crabtree  
 J. H. Lambert

**1928-1932**

C. A. Mitchell  
 M. L. Greever  
 J. E. Honaker  
 C. A. Crabtree

**1932-1936**

F. M. Radford  
 M. L. Greever  
 C. A. Crabtree  
 J. J. Davidson

**1936-1940**

M. S. Radford  
 M. L. Greever  
 S. K. Groseclose  
 J. J. Davidson

**1940-1944**

J. D. Finley  
 M. L. Greever  
 S. K. Groseclose  
 W. D. Tuggle

**1944-1948**

J. B. Groseclose  
 Way Penley  
 M. L. Greever  
 W. D. Tuggle

**1948-1952**

John S. Penley  
 M. L. Greever  
 W. R. Patrick  
 W. D. Tuggle

**1952-1956**

C. P. Muncy-I. S. Kidd  
 Charles G. Waddell  
 C. L. Morehead  
 J. S. Penley

**1956-**

George Wright  
 J. H. Kinser  
 Ira S. Kidd  
 Charles G. Waddell

Board meetings are held in  
 the Court House every  
 fourth Monday at 10:00  
 a.m.

**Commissioner of Revenue**

Franklin I. Suiter .....	1861-1865
J. W. Finley .....	1865-1869
A. W. Shewey .....	1869-1870
Joseph S. French .....	1870-1871
District Appraisers .....	1871-1875
L. J. Miller .....	1875-1891
D. F. Thompson .....	1891-1895
M. S. Bruce .....	1895-acting
R. D. Boyle .....	1895-1899
H. F. Walker .....	1899-1904
J. C. Kitts .....	1904-1908
W. B. Allen .....	1908-1912
W. W. Kegley .....	1912-1914
L. F. Grayson .....	1914-1920
W. H. Newberry .....	1920-1928

W. S. Newberry .....	1928-1940
G. C. Havens .....	1940-

William G. Mustard was elected first County Surveyor  
in 1861.

### Superintendent of Schools

(Date of appointment shown)

H. W. Broderick .....	Sept. 18, 1870
William Hicks .....	March 24, 1871
W. B. Honaker .....	May 18, 1877
James J. Taylor .....	Jan. 9, 1882
D. H. Muncy .....	July 1, 1885
F. L. Dunn .....	July 1, 1909
J. A. Wagner .....	July 1, 1921
R. P. Reynolds .....	July 1, 1942
Henry Groseclose .....	July 1, 1946
R. P. Reynolds .....	July 1, 1948
James O. Morehead .....	July 1, 1953

### Treasurer

Sheriffs served .....	1861-1871
D. W. Dunn .....	1871-1883
William Dillow .....	1883-1891
Hiram R. Stowers .....	1891-1895
George W. Stowers .....	1895-1899
L. M. Newberry .....	1899-1904
J. H. Greever .....	1904-1912
J. S. Dehart .....	1912-1920
G. C. Hamilton .....	1920-1928
H. B. Shufflebarger .....	1928-1940
G. A. Allen .....	1940-1954
H. G. Helvey .....	1954-1956
G. K. Morehead .....	1956-

### BLAND COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

CHARLES WADDELL, representing Sharon District,  
was elected in 1951 and has served as chairman since 1955.

IRA S. KIDD, representing Seddon District, was elect-  
ed in 1952 to fill unexpired term of C. P. Muncy, deceased,  
both as a Board member and as a member of the Welfare  
Board.

GEORGE A. WRIGHT, representing Mechanicsburg District, was elected in 1955 and has served continuously since that date.

JOHN H. KINSER, representing Rocky Gap District, was elected in 1955 and remains in that capacity.

ALBERT WARREN NEWBERRY, Clerk, was appointed in July, 1960, to fill the unexpired term of Gilbert R. Repass, deceased.



Left to Right: George A. Wright, Ira S. Kidd, John H. Kinser, Charles Waddell and A. Warren Newberry.

#### RESIDENTS OF BLAND COUNTY IN THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Newberry, S. H., 1865-66, 1866-67

Davis, Addison, 1869-70, 1870-71

Munsey, Thomas J., 1871-72, 1872-73

Grayson, Andrew J., 1874-75

Davidson, John A., 1875-76, 1876-77, 1877-78

Honaker, James D., 1881-82, 1889-90

Mustard, S. P., 1883-84

Burton, John, 1889-90

Bird, George T., 1904, 1924, 1926, 1927

Allen, George A., 1932-1933

Walker, Dr. J. N., 1934

Davidson, Dr. J. J., 1940

Bird, D. Woodrow, 1948, 1950, 1952, 1954

## RESIDENTS OF BLAND COUNTY IN THE SENATE

French, James M., 1869-71, 1871-73

Newberry, Samuel H., 1874-75, 1875-77, 1881-1882, 1883-84

Williams, Samuel W., 1885-87, 1887-88

Bird, D. Woodrow, 1956, 1958, 1960

Sources: Dodson, E. Griffith, *The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1919-1939*; *Manual of the Senate and House of Delegates*; *The Warrock-Richardson Almanack*; *Chataigne's Virginia Gazetteer and Classified Business Directory*; Personal Property Tax Lists for Bland County.

## GEORGE THOMAS BIRD



George Thomas Bird, a farmer and businessman in Bland County for many years, was born October 9, 1865. He was active in civic and political affairs of the county, was Chairman of the Bland County Democratic Committee for a number of years; and served three terms in the Virginia House of Delegates, 1904-1906; 1924-1928.

Mr. Bird married Carrie Louise Burton of Bland County and to this union was born eleven children, all of whom are now living. Mr. Bird died August 12, 1945.



## D. WOODROW BIRD



D. Woodrow Bird, farmer and dairyman of Bland County, was born July 6, 1912.

Mr. Bird served four two-year terms as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates, 1948-1956, representing Bland and Giles Counties. He was elected to the Virginia State Senate in 1955 for a four year term and re-elected in 1959, in which position he still serves, representing Bland, Giles, Pulaski and Wythe Counties composing the 19th. Senatorial District.

Senator Bird is a member of several outstanding committees in the legislature and is now serving as Chairman of the "Commission For Economy In Governmental Expenditures". He was chief patron of the bill creating this commission by act of the legislature, the purpose of which is to study the entire operation of state government in an effort to effect economy and sound business practices in the operation of Virginia government.

Mr. Bird is married to the former Elizabeth K. Dunn and the couple has two daughters and two sons.

### EXCERPTS FROM MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF BLAND COUNTY PERTAINING TO THE WELFARE PROGRAM IN THE COUNTY BEGINNING IN AUGUST, 1861

**Thursday, August 15, 1861**

Randolph Hall and Joseph Fanning, Overseers of the Poor of this County, appeared in Court and took the several oaths prescribed by law.

The Court appropriated the sum of five hundred dollars to be expended for benefit of the families of volunteers now in the service of the Confederate States of America,

and appointed John C. Shannon as Treasurer and Samuel W. Young, Norman Newberry, Joseph Wohlford and William W. Compton, Commissioners to provide for the necessities of said families. And it is ordered that the Clerk of this Court issue bonds for said amount as said Shannon may direct and the Court guarantee the payment of the same in any form in which they may be issued.

The Court fix the first Monday in June each year for the meeting of the Overseers of the Poor.

W. Groseclose, P. J.  
Presiding Justice

### **September 12, 1861**

William S. Kidd appeared in Court and the Court, being convinced that he was duly elected Overseer of the Poor, ordered that he be qualified by taking the necessary oaths required by law.

Ordered that Joseph Fanning, Overseer of the Poor in the third district, bind out until they become twenty-one years of age to a suitable person or persons, Albert Pegram and Martin Pegram, and be governed in so doing by the law in regard to the same.

Ordered that Joseph Fanning, Overseer of the Poor in the third district of the County, do bind over, agreeable to law to suitable persons, Mary Wade and Lucinda Wade, children of Joshua and Margaret Wade.

Ordered that Randolph Hall, Overseer of the Poor in the second district of this County, bind out, as the law directs, the child of Nancy Dillo.

### **Thursday, October 17, 1861**

Ordered that an election be held on Wednesday, the 6th day of November, 1861, in the first district of this County, to fill the office of Overseer of the Poor and the same conductor and commissioners superintending the election of President and Vice President shall superintend the same and make a return to Court.

### **December 1861**

Thomas P. Umbarger, being duly elected Overseer of the Poor in the first District, appeared in Court and qualified by taking the necessary oaths required by law.

### **February 6, 1871**

Ordered by the Board of Supervisors with the consent of the Superintendent of the Poor that the sum of three hundred five dollars (\$305.00) be allowed to Samuel E. Stinson and G. H. Neel for rent of the Dillo farm, together with mill property, from the 25th day of February, 1871, until the 15th day of November, 1871; said mill and farm to be used as a place of general reception for the paupers of the county.

Ordered that Randolph Hall, Superintendent of the Poor, be allowed two hundred (\$200.00) dollars for public services for the year 1871.

### **Friday, June 9, 1871**

This day, Isaiah Bruce presented a claim against the county amounting to ten dollars, the same being for keeping Martha Hill, a pauper, from the 1st day of December, 1870, until March the 1st, 1871, which was allowed.

### **Friday, June 16, 1871**

Citizens of Bland allowed grants ranging from \$1.25 to \$10.00 for the keeping of paupers in their homes.

Ordered that Dr. J. M. Lovell be allowed the sum of \$94.75 for medical services rendered to paupers of Bland County at different periods from May, 1869, until May 1870, as shown per accounts filed.

### **June 17, 1871**

In consequence of there having been no poorhouse in the county for the year 1870, and the Board at its July meeting, 1870, not being aware of the fact that it was their duty to appoint a Superintendent of the Poor; and whereas Randolph Hall, former agent of the Board of Overseers of the Poor for Bland, proceeded on the 1st day of December, 1870, to audit the indebtedness of the County for 1870 on accounts of poor claims and report the same to the Board; and whereas the Board having examined said report and each claim mentioned therein; the Board is satisfied that the same are just and ought to be paid by the County.

### **December 13, 1871**

This day Randolph Hall, Superintendent of the Poor of this County, rendered his report to the Board, whereupon the Board proceeded to settle with said Hall, as Superintendent for the year ending the 1st day of December, 1871, and it appearing that the sum of \$546.18 had been received by him, he produced to the Board satisfactory vouchers of his expenditures in the same amount.

### **December 14, 1871**

Whereas the Board of Supervisors of this County has purchased of Hickman Stowers a farm on Clear Fork for a place of general reception for the poor of this County, upon which the paupers of the County now are, by the terms of which purchase the Board is to pay to said Stowers the sum of \$1500.00.

### **January 2, 1872**

Ordered that Randolph Hall, Superintendent of the Poor of this County be and he is hereby allowed \$200.00 for his services as superintendent for the year 1872, to be paid out of levy for said year.

### **June 24, 1872**

Ordered that the sum of \$337.23 be levied to pay balance due for buildings at Poor House, the same to be paid by Treasurer upon warrants drawn by Board in favor of Randolph Hall, Superintendent of Poor, who is to pay the same to the several parties entitled thereto upon contracts made and services rendered toward the erection of said buildings.

Ordered that the further sum of \$350.00 be levied to pay the expense of the paupers of the County for the present year 1872.

### **January 14, 1873**

Expenditures for the poor for the year ending December 31, 1872:

\$314.61 — for buildings at the poor house.

\$359.31 — for other necessary expenditures.



**June 18, 1873**

Ordered that Randolph Hall, Superintendent of the Poor of this County, be and he is hereby allowed the sum of \$200.00 for his public services for the year 1873.

**January 12, 1874**

Expenditures for poor — \$353.45. Amount payable out of the county levy of 1874.

**June 29, 1874**

Ordered that George W. Stowers, Superintendent of the Poor of this County, be allowed the sum of \$120.00 as his salary as such for the year ending December 31, 1874. And it is furthered ordered that the further sum of \$80.00 be allowed to said Stowers in consideration of labor performed by him in person on said farm and other considerations.

**January 14, 1875**

This day George W. Stowers, Superintendent of the Poor of this County, presented his report for the year ending November 31, 1874, which was accepted by the Board and ordered filed.

**June 23, 1875**

Ordered that Samuel W. Williams be and he is hereby allowed the sum of \$5.00 for his services as agent for this Board in procuring a deed for the poor house farm.

Ordered that the Clerk of the County Court be and he is hereby allowed the sum of \$2.25 for recording deed to the poor house farm.

**January 10, 1876**

Locke, Ray and Thompson this day presented a claim against the County for making a coffin for Charlotte Higginbotham, a pauper, amounting to two dollars fifty cents (\$2.50), which was examined and allowed by the Board.

Isaac Bland this day presented a claim against the County for making a coffin for A. Austin's boy, a pauper, amounting to \$5.00, which was examined and allowed by the Board.

**January 26, 1880**

Whereas certain complaints have been made as to the management of the poor house by the present superintendent, it is ordered that A. J. Muncy, William Kitts, B. F. Petree and J. S. French be and they are hereby appointed a committee to go to the place of general reception for the poor of this county and investigate and ascertain the facts as to the matter in which said poor house has been kept and managed by George W. Stowers, Superintendent of the Poor of this County; and said committee is directed to take any evidence they may deem proper to ascertain the facts in regard to said management and make report to the Board at the next meeting.

**August 18, 1883**

Whereas, the Board has this day concluded to sell or exchange the poor house property of this county, if they can make such a contract or purchase of other property in lieu thereof as will lessen the probable costs for keeping the poor and properly provide and care for same, it is ordered that Daniel Morehead, J. G. French, Issac Kegley and S. H. Newberry be and they are hereby appointed a committee for the purpose and directed to come together and proceed to ascertain where will be a suitable location for a place of general reception for the poor of this county, and what will be the cost of same, and report to the next meeting of the Board which will be on the 13th day of Sept. 1883, and any other matters touching the same which they can deem pertinent, and they will also report if there be several competing propositions as to purchases by or sale to the County of different locations, and as to the advisability of making a selection of same.

Whereas, in order to lessen the expenses for furnishing medical aid to the poor of this county, it is deemed advisable by this Board to receive bids from the physicians of this county for contract to render medical aid to the poor, those for whom the county is bound under the law to furnish such aid. It is ordered that, at its next meeting on the 13th day of Sept., 1883, the Board will receive sealed bids from such of said physicians as may offer same in regard thereto — the bids to be offered for the different magisterial districts separately, but any physician to have the right to bid on one or more of said districts as he may choose, and the Board to have the right to receive or reject

the same upon consideration; the physician binding himself to furnish all proper and necessary medical service by visits to see the sick and furnish medicine therefor.

(Following the above decision, Doctors D. A. Miller and J. L. Miller submitted their bids and entered into a contract with the Board of Supervisors that they would furnish all proper and necessary medical aid for the paupers of this county at a salary of \$59.00 per year.)

#### **May 3, 1884**

William Terry was contracted as Superintendent of the Poor at a salary of \$225.00 per year.

#### **April 23, 1887**

The Board adopted a plan for the government and management of the Poor House and hereby fixes upon the price of \$5.00 per month per head to be paid for the maintenance and proper care of the paupers at the poor house.

#### **May 14, 1887**

Voted for a new Superintendent of the Poor and cast the votes in favor of A. F. Harman.

#### **July 29, 1891**

A. J. Stowers was contracted as Superintendent of the Poor.

#### **There were no records available from 1891 until 1938**

#### **June 29, 1938**

Mr. E. P. Boyden, Field Representative of the State Dept. of Public Welfare, called a meeting of the Board of Public Welfare of Bland County.

This board, who had previously been appointed by the Judge of the Circuit Court, was composed of M. L. Greever, Bland, Va., C. A. Crabtree, Ceres, Va., and C. A. Mitchell, Crandon, Va.

Mr. M. L. Greever — Chairman  
Mr. G. C. Hamilton — Superintendent  
Miss Ethel Bane — Stenographer

**August 27, 1938**

The Board appointed Miss Mary Repass Umberger to the position of Superintendent.

**December 31, 1942**

The Board at this time considered the application of and employed Mrs. Sadie M. Bane as Superintendent.

**August 25, 1948**

Mr. John H. Lambert, Rocky Gap, Va., was appointed a Board Member to fill the vacancy created by the death of Mr. C. A. Crabtree.

**January 31, 1952**

Judge Sexton entered an order appointing Charles P. Muncy a member of the Welfare Board to fill the unexpired term of Mr. M. L. Greever, who resigned in order that a member of the Board of Supervisors could be appointed to serve on the Welfare Board.

**February 23, 1952**

Mr. C. A. Mitchell elected Chairman of the Welfare Board.

**September 27, 1952**

Judge V. L. Sexton appointed Mr. I. S. Kidd, Bland, Va., to fill the unexpired term of Mr. C. P. Muncy (deceased).

**October 27, 1956**

Mr. R. Woodrow Scott was appointed a member of the Welfare Board to replace Mr. C. A. Mitchell, retired.

The present Welfare Program has been operating in Bland County since July, 1938, having been set up under the Federal Social Security Act of 1935 and state legislation enacted in 1936.

The program is financed jointly by federal, state and



local appropriations in accordance with rules and regulations made by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

## CHAPTER VI

### TOWNS AND VILLAGES

Bland County boasted many settlements in its early days; however, with the building of roads, telephones, and other means of communication, many of these settlements have given way to fewer and larger towns and villages. According to the 1960 census, the population of Bland County was 5,982.

Among the settlements recalled by the old timers and found in the personal columns of old newspapers are: Effna, Tilson Mill, Helvey, Pleasant Grove, Wire Bridge, Mahoney (now Bethany or Shake Rag), Byron, and Stowersville.

CERES is probably the oldest settlement in Bland County, since records show that as early as 1753 a survey was made on the North Fork of the Holston River. James Burke passed through this community when he discovered Burkes Garden around 1749. Bear Garden was the first name given to this community.



Village of Ceres in the Year 1911

Some of the familiar names found in early records were Spangler, Sluss, Harmon, Davis, Wilson, Groseclose, Foglesong, Repass, Umbarger, Crabtree, Bruce, Hudson, Tilson, Cassell, Shannon, and Lambert. For protection, Spangler's Fort was built on the banks of the Holston. Some of the logs of this fort may still be seen in an old barn on the Paul Crabtree farm. Many of the descendants of these early settlers still live on land settled by their forefathers six generations ago.

In 1848 a turnpike was constructed from Fancy Gap to Tazewell Court House, passing through Sharon Springs to Burkes Garden. This was an old stage coach and toll road which brought many distinguished southern ladies and gentlemen to the health resort and hotel at Sharon Springs. Among other things, this resort boasted a bowling alley and pool tables.

With the Civil War and the fall of the South, the hotel was converted to a co-educational college which enrolled young men and women from this and adjoining counties. This gave the young people advantages which left indelible impressions on their lives and helped to build worthy characters. Many passed through its portals to become doctors, lawyers, preachers, teachers, and civic leaders.

The name Ceres was given to this settlement in 1879 when Captain H. C. Groseclose established a post office there. Mr. Groseclose took the name from the Goddess of Agriculture since this was principally a farming community.

Industries in the Ceres community have included stores, a blacksmith shop, tan yard, sawmills, flour mill and a wood working shop. There were Lutheran, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches, Masonic and Odd Fellows Lodge Halls, doctor's offices, a restaurant, and even plank sidewalks which have been torn away.

MECHANICSBURG was laid off about 1830 on land owned by either Thomas Stafford or Nehemiah Henderson. The first house was built by James Hoge. This was a busy and thriving town and at one time was the center of activity in what is now Bland County. Businesses included a carding mill on what is now the John Newberry place; a powder mill on the William Mustard place; a cabinet shop, two blacksmith shops owned by Marion Gordon and C. W.



**Village of Mechanicsburg — Year Unknown**

Keister; shoe shops operated by Preacher Jim Taylor and Jasper Powers; and general stores owned by Burton and Songer, Wohlford, Mustard and Taylor, Will Hawkins and Teach and Ferguson. Other businesses were a printing shop, a saddle shop, a tailoring shop, carpenter shops and tanneries. Mechanicsburg remains an active, well-loved community in the county and is remembered also as the home of the Keister Hotel where food was always plentiful and good and the traveler was always welcome.

BLAND was not always the name of the town which is the county seat. First it was called Crab Orchard from the Crab Orchard Creek which run through the meadow later donated by James Wayne Grayson for the county buildings. The town's name was changed to Seddon in honor of James Alexander Seddon and in March, 1861, it became Bland in honor of Richard Bland. The first post office was established in this community in 1851. Industries and businesses were numerous in the early days of Bland. There were blacksmith shops (one in the vicinity of what is now Kidd's Garage); a printing shop, shoe-maker's shop; wagon and harness shops and a tannery run by Isaac Kegley which stood on land where Dr. Kegley's home now stands. Cal Hagan made side saddles in his



saddle shop. Carpenters and brick masons played important parts in the building of the town. A grain mill once stood on the property now owned by Grat Muncy. Records show that John Newton Harmon worked in a brick yard in Bland in 1873.

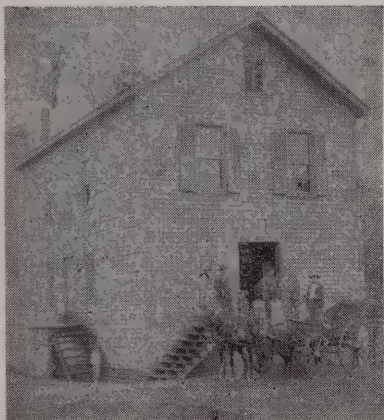
Three hotels have been in operation in Bland. The Lee House or Dodd House (as some remember it) still stands on Main Street and is said to be the oldest building in town still standing. The hotel was built by B. Dodd and holds memories of dances and gay times enjoyed by travelers and local people.



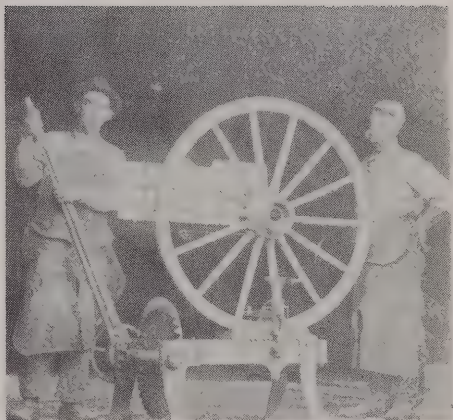
**The Village of Bland In The Year 1910**



**The Dodd House — Bland**



**Grain Mill — Bland**



**Blacksmith Shop — Bland**

The Virginia House was located on “Back Street” or “Jackson Street” where Mrs. J. B. Muncy’s home is now located. This establishment was operated by N. A. Bruce.

The third hotel was called The Fannon Hotel and was located on Main Street where Mrs. Myrtle Bird’s home now stands. A proprietor of this well-remembered landmark was Dr. J. A. Wagner. Some of Bland’s citizens like to reminisce about the “good old days” when they attended school there. But progress did away with the old hotel and school in about 1925 when it was torn down to make room for residences.



**Fannon Hotel, Bland, Va.**

Bland's main industry in the past few years was Bland Hosiery Mill, which operated from 1939 until 1960. In the past one hundred years or more, Bland has grown in many ways and is the center of the county's business.

BASTIAN, HICKSVILLE and SUITER, located in Hunting Camp Valley, have become as one community in the minds of the citizens since they are so closely knit together by their industries and interests.

Early settlers in this valley were: W. J. Bruce, Eli Leedy, Nint Kidd, Jess Hicks, Charles and George Starks. Dave Walker, Cliff Britts, Thomas Coburn, Frank Kidd, Mrs. Nannie Eagle, Davis Muncy, Alex and Sam Suiter and Fayette Neal.

Suiter was named for Alex Suiter who took eleven hundred acres of land in grants in 1830 and settled there. This land was granted by the Governor from the "Big Survey." Here was located the first manganese ore mine in Bland County. The ore was mined by simply picking it up off the ground and hauling it out. W. F. White operated a lumber mill here in about 1917.

Hicksville once had a post office which was located in what is said to have been the oldest store in the county. There are records of a Grange organization in this farming settlement in the year 1875. Visitors to a cemetery here have found graves with markers dating back to 1865.



**Store and Post Office at Hicksville**

Bastian was first called Parkersburg for Parker Hornbarger, who inherited most of the land on which the town is built. Jack Hager owned one hundred and fifty acres which paralleled the land owned by Hornbarger.

A quotation on a map of Parkersburg reads: "Mr. Hornbarger was a funny old man, just as funny as his name, was a good citizen and neighbor and reared a respectable family of three boys and three girls."

James Starks and Eli Leedy later owned much of the land until the Virginia Hardwood Lumber Company opened a large mill which operated there for many years.

The town's name was later changed to Bastian for F. E. Bastian, manager of Bland County's only railroad. Tan bark, lumber and cattle were shipped in large quantities on this railroad.

Wallace J. Bruce was responsible for the town's water supply and largely responsible for the developing of the town.

Industries and businesses of these three communities, past and present, are: W. F. White Lumber Company, G. W. Miller Planing Mill, Virginia Hardwood Lumber Company, Canva Mining Company (Manganese), Bastian Manufacturing Company (which at present employs over four hundred) and C & A Lumber Company. Bland County Supply was one of the largest stores in the county, selling carloads of feed. Civilian Conservation Corps No. 1388 was located at Bastian from June, 1933, until December, 1942.

Bastian, as of 1961, has two churches, Bastian Union Church, built in 1896, and Church of God; an elementary school and a modern post office dedicated in 1958.





**Scene in Bastian, Virginia**



**Band Mill and Camp, Hardwood Lumber Co. Bastian, Virginia**

ROCKY GAP was a settlement during the Civil War and was named for the rocks which were so abundant and because of its location in the gap of the mountain. The old Methodist Church which stood there was burned during the war to prevent the Yankees from taking the supplies stored there. Three saw mills were responsible for building up this town. They were the English-Ott Lumber Company, Fisher Flooring Company, and the Bell Flooring Company.

Rocky Gap is located on Clear Fork and Wolf Creeks which are among the most desirable fishing waters in this section. On the banks of these creeks are located many cabins owned by citizens of Bluefield and Tazewell, as well as Bland Countians, and used for hunting and fishing headquarters. The scenery around Rocky Gap is as beautiful as any in Southwest Virginia.

The largest school in Bland County is Rocky Gap High School. The town, which has a post office, several general stores, and an antique shop (the only one in the county) is a progressive community.



**Rocky Gap, Virginia**



**Mill Race, Rocky Gap, Virginia**



**General Store and Depot  
Rocky Gap, Virginia**

HOLLYBROOK was named for the large holly trees located on the farm on which Colonel William Neal Harman was born and which later became the settlement. William Neal's grandfather, Henry, built a log house there, in which he and his family lived and which was later used as a place of public worship until a church was built in the neighborhood. Henry Harman was instrumental in the establishment of Bland as a county, since he did not enjoy the long ride to Giles County to transact his business.

Ding Burton settled near what is now Wessendonck Church. He ran the first mill to grind grain, using power from a mountain stream. This branch was named for him and is known as Ding Branch. Mr. and Mrs. Ottomar Stange came to Bland County from Cleveland, Ohio, shortly after World War I and bought the Johnson mines on Flat Top Mountain. These manganese ore mines were operated for many years, giving employment to numerous families and bringing revenue into the county. Since that time other manganese mines have been in operation in the Hollybrook section.

Hollybrook has an elementary school and several general stores and is principally a farming section. The county's only artesian well is located on the Esca Mitchell farm near Hollybrook.



**Manganese Mines — Hollybrook, Virginia**

POINT PLEASANT, better known as "The Slide", once had a post office, two stores, two churches and two

schools. One store was owned by W. H. Hoge and the other by the Point Pleasant Joint Stock Company. The settlement is located on a creek which was known as Helvey's Mill Creek. The Helveys operated a mill at one time on the property on which now stands Thompson Brothers General Store. Point Pleasant Academy was a school of higher learning and was located near the old Point Pleasant Presbyterian Church. Miss Sally Helvey, daughter of Pulzer Helvey, deeded the land for Hoge's Chapel Methodist Church and cemetery. The Baptists used the church one Sunday each month. The Slide is a farming community with descendants of early settlers of Bland County living there.

KIMBERLING SPRINGS was not a settlement per se, but was one of the most famous resorts and recreational spots in this section. Visitors from a distance came by hack or stage coach which ran daily between Wytheville and the Kimberling Springs and was operated by W. N. Brown.

The hotel was built about 1854 by Edwin S. Booth of New York. Mrs. Nidermaier operated the hotel for Mr. Booth until Mr. Emanuel Ludwig took it over. In the early 1860's the hotel was managed by James and Sam Clark of Bluefield, West Virginia. Succeeding the Clarks, the management was taken over by Mr. William Kitts.

Dances at the old resort were famous throughout the surrounding counties and states. There were also a race course and tournaments. Visitors came from all parts of the south for these tournaments. One likes to picture the minuet, which must have been the featured dance, and the lovely dresses the women wore.

The main building was a three-story frame, flanked by a group of log or frame cottages. The resort could accommodate quite a large number of guests, as many as five hundred, it is said. The establishment was used for approximately twenty-six years before being discontinued about 1880. Some existing buildings in the county have lumber in them which came from Kimberling Springs resort buildings. For many years in the 1930's and 1940's an annual picnic was held at the location of this old resort.





**Kimberling Springs  
Hotel**

DRY FORK is Bland County's colored community, located near Rocky Gap. Records show that the earliest settlers here came as "freed slaves" and purchased land for farming.

The farmers had little to work with but their oxen. They were inspired however by their Christian spirit, when they came. They built their own homes, made their own implements and wagons. They were dependent upon their own resources and may well be pleased with the progress they have made in making their community a good place in which to live.

After using the timber they needed for building and fuel, the farmers were able to sell some timber to Mr. L. H. Sanders, who set up a sawmill at Dry Fork.

A blacksmith shop moved into the community and made the old wooden beam plow with which the farmers worked their gardens and corn fields. Oxen were used for pulling these plows.

The first school, located on M. H. Ferguson's farm, was built of hewn logs and daubed with mud. Mrs. Ardella Ferguson was its first teacher. This school was also the location of the first preaching in the community. The Dry Fork school children are now transported to Tazewell County High School.

Bland County is proud of its colored citizens and friends.

WOLF CREEK is not a settlement in itself, but is a wide area on the banks of Wolf Creek classified as Upper, Middle, and Lower Wolf Creek.

A pottery shop was in existence on Upper Wolf Creek in the early days of Bland County. This shop made jars and jugs, some of which are in the possession of the Harvey Gross, Will Davidson, and Walter Johnson families.

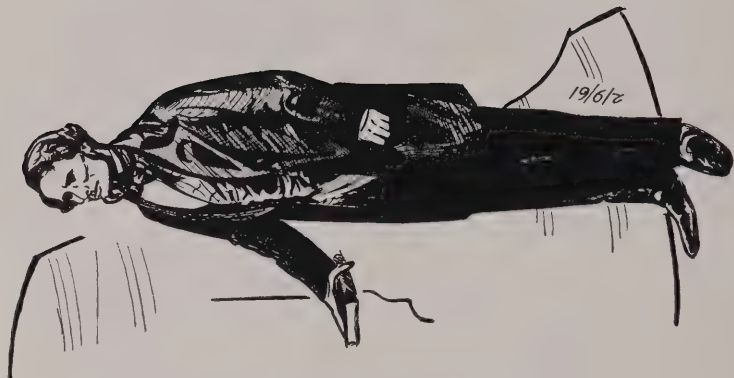
The Justice family owned and operated a winery on Wolf Creek and sold the wine, using their own label. One of these labels is owned by Mrs. Margaret Shearsuse of Orlando, Florida.

May these summaries of Bland County's towns be a memorial to its pioneer families who fought the swamps; built and protected their homes; and fostered education and religious freedom, thereby leaving to us, their descendants, this priceless heritage.



"That a nation which contained hardly more than 30 million people, north and south together, could sustain 600,000 deaths without faltering, is a lasting testimonial to something unquarable in the American spirit. And that a transcending sense of unity and larger common purpose could, in the end, cause the men and women who had suffered so greatly to close ranks once the contest ended and to go on together to build a greater, freer and happier America must be a source of inspiration as long as our country may last."

Dwight D. Eisenhower  
December 6, 1960



## CHAPTER VII

### BLAND COUNTY AND THE CIVIL WAR

By an act of the General Assembly on March 30, 1861, the Commonwealth of Virginia gave birth to the new County of Bland just three weeks before Virginia joined the Confederate States of America.

A spirit of dissention had been gathering in the North against the way of life in the South. Suddenly it grew into a loud rumble and black war clouds, accompanied by the roar of cannon, covered our peaceful hills and valleys. The spectre of another war reared its ugly head and we were once again engulfed in a bloody conflict that threw brother against brother creating unbelievable chaos — a nation divided against itself.

Bland County, as well as other parts of the South, was unwilling to accept the edicts laid down by her neighbors to the North and joined in the great rebellion that rolled to and fro over the Southland leaving ruin, devastation and death in its wake. Great plantations were wiped out; factories and homes were burned; and families were separated, some never to be reunited. Terrible hardships were endured as all supplies were cut off. Women, children and





the incapacitated had to carry on as best they could with what meager means they had at hand.

It seemed as though the Gods of War were using our fair Southland for a playground with the intentions of leaving nothing but death and desolation.

It is a matter of history that the people of these mountains had always been fiercely independent. They volunteered their services to fight the unjust aggression, answering the call of duty in the preservation of the beliefs that had been instilled in them by their sturdy forefathers of Bland County.

A most interesting and fitting description of the Confederate soldier, whether he be a Virginian or not, is that given by David E. Johnston, eminent Virginia historian, in his "A History of the Middle New River Settlements":

"The Confederate Soldier was the most remarkable in many ways of all the soldiers the world has produced. He could seemingly know more, and in fact did, than the officers in immediate command; and he could know less than any soldier in an army when he wanted it that way, or when so instructed, or when he found it necessary for his convenience or profit. He could forget his name, company, regiment, brigade, division, or army commandant; could even forget where he was from or whither he was going. This same soldier could get farther from camp, get more rations, and get back quicker than any other fellow you ever met. When he was marching, he could see more, laugh louder, brood less over his troubles; and, when he wished, could carry more than any soldier any other army ever produced. He could march barefoot, go farther, complain less, eat nothing, never sleep, and endure more genuine suffering than any soldier who ever marched under the banners of Napoleon. When he reached camp after a long, toilsome march, he could start a fire, find water, and go to cooking quicker than the best trained cook in the land. Such were the men who were trained by the Lee's, Johnston's, Longstreet, Jackson, Pickett, and the Hill's."

This infant county was not without its share of such men, although some special act of a benevolent providence kept the war itself, except for scattered skirmishes, away from the soil of Bland County. It is indeed regrettable that the names of its soldier sons were not more properly

recorded for the benefit of posterity, the fact being that only the names of a few can now be given with certainty. As is the case in other sections of this book, the basis for the following work on our county's Civil War effort is the previously-mentioned 1906 history by Johnston.

The only military unit clearly defined as being composed at least primarily of Bland Countians was the "Bland Rangers", commanded by Captain William N. Harman. They were engaged, along with units from Mercer, Grayson, Tazewell, and Kanawha Counties, in a brief action with a portion of General Jacob D. Cox's Federal forces at the home of Henry Clark near Princeton, Mercer County, on May 1, 1862. Private Alexander Miller, Bland Rangers, was severely injured, being one of the eight Confederate casualties. The Bland Rangers covered the retreat of the Confederates from the site of this battle to Princeton and onward beyond Rocky Gap. As a consequence of the retreat, and in an effort to keep the village of Princeton from falling into Federal hands, Colonel Walter Jenifer, Commandant of all Confederate forces in Mercer County, supervised the carrying out of his order to burn every building there except the jail; then he fled to Wytheville via Rocky Gap and Bland Court House. Among the Federals who entered Princeton while it was ablaze were two future presidents of the United States, Rutherford B. Hayes and William McKinley.

Later, in September, 1862, the Bland Rangers were attached to a newly-formed battalion at Charleston under command of a Major Saliers, the other elements composing it being Cos. A and D of the 17th Va. Cavalry (Mercer County units). Their first expedition was to Jackson County, from which they drove a Federal force across the Ohio River. Later engagements took place, as an element of General A. G. Jenkins' brigade, at several locations in the Shenandoah Valley, Gettysburg, Boonesboro, Sperryville, and Gap Mountain.

The next reference to military action in our county deals with the following account: The Federal cavalry leader in Western Virginia, Brig. Gen. W. W. Averill, with 2479 officers and men, left the Kanawha River above Charleston on May 1, 1864, by way of Logan and Wyoming Court Houses to Abbs Valley in Tazewell County. They proceeded toward Wytheville, near which on May 10 they were defeated by a Confederate force commanded by Gen. William E. Jones. In this battle was the 16th Va. Cav.

Regt. which was composed in part of Tazewell County men. The Federal force sustained 100 casualties including Gen. Averill, who was wounded. He drew off his troops and passed down Walkers Creek by Shannon's (Poplar Hill) and to Pepper's Ferry where he crossed New River. On to Blacksburg and Christiansburg they went, then turned northward in an effort to follow General Crook; however, near Newport (Giles County), they were engaged by Colonel William H. French and his Mercer County men consisting of General Jenkins' cavalry brigade and part of the troops of Col. William L. Jackson. The Federals were forced to retreat by a bridle path leading over the mountains into Monroe County, where they joined Gen. George Crook. Colonel French's troops returned to Narrows.

General Crook left the Kanawha River on May 2, 1864, with eleven regiments of infantry, part of two regiments of cavalry, and two battalions of artillery, a total of 6155 men. They marched via Fayetteville, Raleigh Court House, Princeton, Rocky Gap, and Shannon's to the Cloyd Farm on Back Creek in Pulaski County. (Mr. R. A. Dobyms of Trinkle and Dobyms, Contractors, Dublin, now lives at the Cloyd home.) Here, on May 9, he found the command of Gen. Jenkins, which consisted of the 36th, 45th, and 60th Virginia Regiments; the 45th Va. Infantry Battalion; and Bryan's, Ringgold's, and Douthat's Virginia batteries drawn up in line of battle to meet him. The total Confederate force, counting Major Smith's men who soon joined them, was less than 3000 men. They were from Tazewell, Wythe, Pulaski, Bland, Montgomery, Giles, Monroe, Greenbrier, Fayette, Raleigh, Mercer, Boone, Logan, Putnam, Cabell, Wayne, and possibly other area counties. A fierce battle ensued for several hours before the Confederates were defeated and driven off after losses of 76 killed, 262 wounded, and 200 missing. The loss was inconsiderable in comparison with the value of the slain, among whom were some of the bravest, most daring soldiers in the whole Confederate army. Lt. Colonel Edwin H. Harman, a brave young officer of great promise, and Captain Robert R. Crockett of the 45th Va. Inf. Regt. were killed. Lt. Col. George W. Hammond, Major Jacob N. Taylor, and Captain Moses McClintic of the 60th Va. Regt. were killed. Among the wounded of the 36th and 60th Regiments were Capt. Rufus A. Hale, S. S. Dews, Lts. Larue, Austin, Bailey and Stevenson, and many others including Major Thomas L. Broun, Post Quartermaster at

Dublin. Tazewell County lost not only the gallant Lt. Col. Harman but Capt. C. A. Fudge and many others. Bland County men distinguished themselves in this battle and lost many of their best and bravest killed or wounded, among the latter that tall and heroic youth, Andrew Jackson Stowers, flag-bearer of the 45th Regiment. Lt. A. W. Hoge, his brother M. J. Hoge, and their distant cousin, George D. Pearis, of Bryan's battery, fell during that battle which took place near the earlier homeplace of all three men. Federal losses were 688 killed and wounded. Colonel John McCausland, who assumed command when General Jenkins was wounded, so skillfully conducted the Confederate retreat, to the headwaters of the Roanoke River, that he was promoted to Brigadier General and placed in command of the brigade.

Men from Bland, Giles, Mercer, and Tazewell Counties participated on June 5, 1864, in a battle between Brig. Gen. William E. Jones's 5000 men and 8500 Federal troops under command of Maj. Gen. David Hunter at Piedmont in the Shenandoah Valley. Many New River Valley men were lost, but existing records do not carry the names of the lost. General Jones was killed and the Confederate losses amounted to about 500 killed and wounded plus another 1000 men and several guns captured. The remaining Confederates, under Gen. Imboden after Gen. Jones's death, retreated to Waynesboro. This battle claimed no nobler sacrifice than the life of Tazewell County's distinguished son, Colonel William Henry Brown, Commanding Officer, 45th Virginia Regiment.

Thus, while irrefutable evidence is not available, it seems reasonable to assume that Bland County, as well as its sister counties in Southwest Virginia, furnished troops for numerous widespread engagements throughout the entire Civil War. It also seems reasonable to assume that they acquitted themselves with valor. They fought for what they thought was right, therefore they had no apology to offer anyone not in sympathy with their cause. They simply fought manfully those who came to kill and destroy them and theirs, than which there can be no nobler cause for war among men. While it is true that militarists of the calibre of Lee, Jackson, Johnston and other great Southern generals are few in the recorded history of the world, it is just as true that never has there been another soldier equal to the Confederate soldier. His like has not existed before and is not apt to appear again.



## MOLLY TYNES, THE HEROINE OF THE BATTLE OF WYTHEVILLE

The Federal forces conceived the idea that by an attack and invasion of Wytheville, the following objectives would be achieved: To split the Virginia and Tennessee (now the Norfolk and Western) Railroad at Wytheville and thereby shut off the chief supply of lead from the lead mines near Wytheville and the supply of salt from the salt mines at Saltville. This accomplished, the Confederates and Lee's army would be paralyzed. On July 15, 1863, General Toland and Colonel Powell, in command of the 2nd Union Cavalry and the 34th Ohio Infantry, camped at "Rocky Dell" on the farm of Captain William E. Peery, about three miles east of Jeffersonville, now Tazewell, Virginia.

Molly (Mary Elizabeth) Tynes, age 26, who formerly lived at Lynchburg and Shawsville, was assisting her father in caring for her invalid mother at his place known

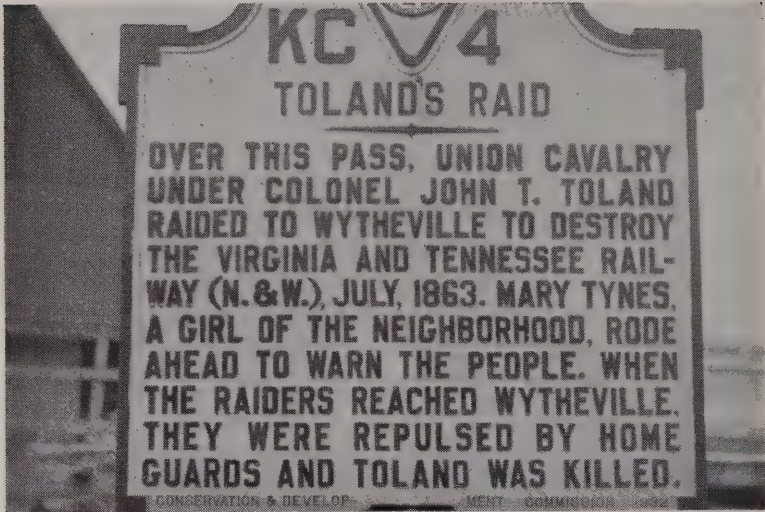


as "Rocky Dell". Molly overheard a messenger for the Federals relate the plans of attack on Wytheville. The messenger did not see Molly, but she heard the plans in detail. Molly realized that the Wytheville area was defenseless because all the able-bodied men were away at the front lines of the Confederacy. Both Molly and her father were concerned over the vital importance of warning Wytheville and the people along the way between Tazewell and Wytheville. As quickly as possible, Mr. Tynes sent the livestock and other valuables by a Negro man off to the mountains for safe keeping. "Fashion," Molly's mare, was left behind for possible emergency. Molly's courage and patriotism rose to the occasion, and she immediately mounted her mare and set out to notify the people of the plans for the advance of the "Yankees". Little did Molly realize the danger of the long and lonely ride in front of her. It was late evening when she crossed Garden Mountain and entered Burkes Garden, stopping long enough at the residences to shout: "The Yankees are coming." From Burkes Garden, Molly made her ascent up Garden Mountain, which route took her through the wildest and most hazardous country in these parts. The dense forests were known to be inhabited by bear, panther, wolves and wildcats; the route she followed was little more than a path. With courage and determination, Molly arrived at Wytheville at daybreak — tired, scratched from head to foot and her clothes torn by the thick underbrush. The residents of Wytheville, consisting of women, boys, girls and men too old to serve in the Confederate army, took to arms and, in the battle that ensued, killed General Toland and severely wounded Colonel Powell. The Federal troops made a hasty retreat without accomplishing their objective, for which this area in particular, and the South in general, continue to hold in reverence the memory of Molly Tynes.

In later years Molly Tynes became the wife of Honorable W. B. Davidson, prominent in Southwest Virginia's 19th century history.

### TOLAND'S RAID

In July, 1863, Brevet Brigadier John Toland, in command of about one thousand Federal cavalymen, suddenly invaded Tazewell County. He came up the Tug River and



entered Abbs Valley on the afternoon of July 15th, crossed Stony Ridge and camped there for the night. At daybreak on the morning of the 16th., Toland resumed his march. Some of the Federal soldiers burned Lain's mill which stood on the site later known as Witten's mill. General Toland was moving his force very rapidly so as to reach Wytheville as quickly as possible; and his men did not have time to plunder houses on the line of march, which was by way of Burkes Garden, over Brushy Mountain, into Bland County, and across Walkers Mountain following the present highway Routes 21 and 52 into Wytheville.

At about 10 o'clock on the morning of the 16th, some four hours after Toland's men had passed, Colonel A. J. May, who was camping with a small force of Confederates in what is now called the Cove, set out in pursuit of Toland with about fifty mounted men. Coloney May was riding rapidly at the head of the column and was carrying a pennant or small flag. From his manner it appeared that he was saying with his flag, "Follow me". Colonel May and his men on the morning of 17th came in contact with the rear guard of Toland's forces at Stony Fork, some six miles northwest of Wytheville. In this engagement several of the Federal soldiers were killed and a few were taken prisoner. From Stony Fork, General Toland pushed on rapidly to Wytheville, reaching the head of what is now



called Tazewell Street on the 17th of July, 1863, at about 10 o'clock a.m. The people of Wytheville had been notified of the approach of the enemy by Molly Tynes, but no Confederate troops were then stationed at that point. There was a home guard of about fifty youths and men, all of whom were under or over military age. A small detachment of reserves, possibly fifty in number, was sent to their assistance from a Confederate training camp at Dublin, Pulaski County. The command of the one hundred men was placed with Colonel Joseph L. Kent. He had entered the Confederate services as Captain of the Wythe Grays in April, 1861. That company was a unit of the 4th Virginia Infantry, Stonewall Brigade. He had served as Colonel of the 4th Regiment in 1862, but due to ill health had been forced to retire from the service. Colonel Kent, being an experienced military man, made excellent disposition of his small but fearless force. Some of the youths and men concealed themselves in and behind houses along the east and west sides of Tazewell Street and performed desperate feats as sharpshooters, or snipers, as they are now called, while the enemy was advancing along the street.

For some reason, an attempt was made by the invaders to fire the town or at least, certain houses. General Toland was killed in front of the residence of Captain William Giboney, which fronted on Tazewell Street and stood where the present Wytheville Elementary School is located. General Toland was shot through the heart and died instantly. It has never been positively known who fired the fatal shot that killed Toland. Some say that it was Bob Bailey, a youth in his teens and son of Jess Bailey. Others say that it was Andrew Parish, also a youth, who fired the fatal shot. Still others say it was a woman who killed him. In Captain Fortescue's comments, he declared: "Although I was afterward on many hotly-contested fields, I was never upon any that was more so than Wytheville." Nothing more desperately daring was done during the Civil War than the defense that was made by Wytheville by the old men and boys and possibly the women of the town.

The Federals were very much demoralized by their experience at Wytheville. After their rout and upon arriving at the top of Walkers Mountain, Bland County, instead of retreating by the same route by which they had advanced through Tazewell and Burkes Garden, they left the turn-pike road and went down a mountain spur called "Ram's



Horn"; entered the valley of Bland County and turned their march eastward. When they came to the farm of William Stowers they turned their horses into his wheat field and entirely destroyed his crop. From that point they went east to Charles Graysons place. From there they turned back and went through the gap of Brushy Mountain over what is known now as the Laurel Road and down Laurel Creek to Frank Suiter's place in the Hunting Camp valley. They stole all of Mr. Suiter's horses and followed a path across Round Mountain and came into the Wolf Creek valley. They then proceeded up Wolf Creek to Crabtree's Gap and crossed Rich Mountain into the Clear Fork valley. Turning east on Clear Fork, they proceeded down the valley to the Henry Dill place at the mouth of Cove Creek and turned west. A small detachment of Confederate soldiers and Tazewell citizens charged upon the rear guard of the Federals as they were going up the creek and killed several of the enemy, along with the capture of a few prisoners and a number of horses. The raiders crossed East River Mountain at George Gap. Thence they passed through Bluefield, Virginia, and at last gained safety in the mountains of West Virginia.



## REUNION OF CONFEDERATE VETERANS, BLAND, VIRGINIA, 1915

Left to Right, Front Row: Tom Finley, A. A. Ashworth, —?—  
 Jim Crabtree, A. N. Thompson. Second Row-Standing: D. H.  
 Carr, Sam Damewood, —?—, Foglesong —?—, Brack H.  
 Penley, —?—, C. M. Rudder, Bob Green, —?—, John  
 Devors, Dunn Newberry, Joseph Kitts, Will Wright. Third Row:  
 —?—, A. T. Duncan, —?—, —?—, I. F. Stowers,  
 Sam Williams, Bill George Waddle, —?—. Fourth Row:—  
 ?—, Code Whalen, —?—, Jack Stowers, Wash Dunn.

## COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN WIVES AND THEIR CONFEDERATE HUSBANDS

HDQrs. Harmon's Batt. Va. Cav.  
March 20th, 1864

Adeline

I received your kind and welcome letter last night. It was dated 14th and mailed 16th of this inst. I was truly glad to hear from you and am at any time. I would like very much to see you and the boys. It is a little uncertain when I will get to come home, though I expect to get to come some time this Spring.

Tell cousin Euphemia I am a little sorry for her that she did not get Capt. Bogle, though not much as it was her own fault.

Hurry David up so he gets the oats sowed in this month. If it is not sowed in this month it will do no good. I told him so. You must be very saving of your grain and meat. Let no one have any grain, Cheadle, nor any one else, ought not to feed any oats till you see whether there is any left after sowing. Grain cannot be bought for Confederate money, meat neither.

The men in this command don't get as much as they can eat twice a day. Ol salt beef and flour is all they go, sometimes a little bacon and crackers. If you had such fare as some has in the army I believe you would complain. So far as I am concerned, I get enough, though it is rough sometimes. A many a meal I have had cold flat cake and cold beef. We get some bacon and this morning we had sassafras tea, sugar and light bread and bacon. We are now getting our bread baked for us.

Dr. Elijah has been gone two days to try to buy anything for us to eat. I told him to buy anything he could get but flour and beef.

You may get Mr. Wilson to tend that field in corn. Give him the same that David Cameron is to get. I forget what it was. Tell him to pitch in and raise all he can on any fair terms. You are perfectly right in trying to save all the provisions you can. If we had the joles and soap grease here you all throw away, we would eat it. Grain and feed cannot be bought at all here. You need not suffer any uneasiness about me for I will have what I can eat while there is any in the country or army. Maj. Harmon eats and sleeps in our mess and his yellow boy does the drudgery, etc.

Direct to Adj. E. Repass, Warm Springs, Bath Co., Va., Harmons Batt. Va. Cav. Jacksons Brig.

Yours truly  
Elias Repass

Sharon, Bland County, Va.  
April 24, 1864

Elias,

Since I wrote to you we have been treated badly by the soldiers. There was fourteen here and every one took a load of hay. I had to beg for my oats and corn and

then they took a half a bushel of corn and stoled a cake of sugar. I don't think they took any oats. There was 1500 camped at Sharon. They tore Uncle Frank's still house up and broke up the barrels and bent the still caps and was going to shoot Uncle Frank. He said they had injured him five hundred dollars.

There was fifty to eat at Uncle Williams one day. They have made a clean sweep. They took corn from people here that had not more than one bushel. Wagoner said there was thirty at his house and all took a load. They were Witcher's Battalion. They are the meanest men in the world. The 8th Virginia Cavalry are in here too.

George Wolford came here to stay all night. I told him I had nothing but hay to feed on. I did not know what to do. I was glad when he said he was acquainted with you. I knew there was no danger of him. I thought when I saw him they were more of the mean men. He asked me what office you held. I told him you were Quartermaster. Are you? If you are you must tell me.

The stock looks very well. I must close for the present. I could write all day but for fear of wearing your patience I will stop by saying may the Lord be with you.

Goodby, dear Elias,  
Adeline Repass

February 14, 1865

Dear Mary,

I am nearly barefooted but I hope to draw shoes. We haven't much to do but the worst is I can't forrage about over the country to get something to eat. Flour is \$1 per pound, cornmeal \$45 per bushel. Pork is \$5 to \$6 a pound. Tobacco is from \$3 to \$5 a plug. I am sending my measurements home for shoes. Make a neat pair, longer than my foot. Make them round in the shank so that I can get them off and on easy.

I remain your husband until death.

Jezrell



Fort Delaware March  
The 13 1865

My Dear Mary This Leaves me tolerable  
I was captured at Wainesborough  
March the 2<sup>th</sup> Landed here yesterday very  
wornout our treatment is as good as  
could be expected The Boys are all well  
I will give <sup>some of</sup> the names S Davis Wheeler H Hearn  
Jno Bird H Bird E Wright was killed some more  
of the Boys are missing I Left my sachel  
with Abby Terrell in Wainesborough and the  
most of my clothes The exchange of prisoners  
are going on rapidly I hope that I soon  
get home I pray the good Lord to give me  
health he is all my dependence we are  
not allowed to write but few lines you  
must write soon Direct your letter to  
Fort Delaware Co H 45<sup>th</sup> Re Reg 2 Division  
Jezreel Robinett Prisoner of war  
I pray the Lord to Bless and Take of you  
J Robinett

Note: Jezreel Robinette died as a prisoner of war at Ft. Delaware, April 1, 1865. Buried at Finn's Pt. N. J.; body exhumed and buried at Robinette Cemetery near the Slide.

This is a copy from an original letter on parchment written by Franklin P. Waggoner to his wife, Catherine (Muncy), from a Confederate camp in Putnam County, West Virginia.

Putnam County, Oct. the 2nd./1862

Dear Catherine

I will write you a few lines to inform you that I am well at this time and hope that you are enjoying good health this evening. My opportunity of sending a letter by hand came unexpected to me therefore I have to write by the light of a lamp. We are a half mile from the place where we were when I last wrote. All of the 36 — but our company went down the river last week on a scout 12 miles to a place called Buffalow and run the Yankees away from some provisions that was there. We are now in a very fine home that has been deserted by a union man though we will move tomorrow back up to our old camp ground as our regt. has returned from their scout. It is said that the Yanks are in Buffalow again. I can't tell whether we will have a fight soon or not. Mr. Keeling got here the other day he is not very stout yet him and me was de-tailed to wait on a man that is sick with fever he was taken up to Charleston he was mending very fast but I am afraid moving him will be the cause of his death. We are getting enough flour but bacon is scarce. I have written twice before this you must write often to me. I got my likeness taken in Winfield yesterday you can see how I look in camp. It cost 40 cts. there is no cares or Paris here — give my love to all my friends — pray for me yours truly until death F. P. Waggoner

# ROSTERS OF CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS FROM BLAND COUNTY WHO SERVED IN THE CIVIL WAR

"Although Fate Denied Them Victory, They Were  
Crowned With Glorious Immortality"



COMPANY F, 8TH REGIMENT CAVALRY BRI-  
GADE — BLAND COUNTY (CALLED BLAND RANG-  
ERS)—Under Command of Colonel William Neel Harmon

Akers, A. J.  
Akers, Calvin  
Akers, Lem  
Akers, Sam  
Akers, Sam Sr.  
Anderson, J. W.  
Andrews, A. J.  
Blanchitt, Samuel  
Blankenship, Berry  
Blankenship, J. R. C.  
Bogle, Mat  
Brown, A. B.

Brown, Ballard P.—  
    Messenger  
Bruce, George  
Bruce, W. P.  
Burton, John — Wounded  
    near Fort Harrison  
    and Missing in Action  
Burton, Pendleton — Wit-  
    nesses Surrender at  
    Appomatox  
Compton, Jasper - Captain  
Compton - Colonel

Compton, William W.  
 Cooley, Marion  
 Copenhagen, Ransom  
 Corder, B. F.  
 Corder, William R.  
 Costello, V. B.  
 Cubine, John  
 Deland, Nat  
 Dillow, William  
 Dunigan, R. M.  
 Eaton, M. G.  
 Ellison, Mathew  
 Fanning, Allen  
 Fanning, Frank  
 Fanning, Hugh C. —  
     Wounded at Winchester  
 Fanning, W. W.  
 Finley, J. W. — Wounded  
     1861  
 Finley, I. N.  
 Fletcher, J. Floyd  
 Fletcher, M. A.  
 French, Austin  
 French, W. P.  
 Gann, Nathaniel  
 Grayson, Charles  
 Gross, Harvey  
 Groseclose, Henry  
 Hollandsworth, T. J.  
 Hamilton, S. M.  
 Hamilton, W. W.  
 Hammond, Gordon  
 Hancock, Alex  
 Harmon, Grimes  
 Harmon, J. W.  
 Harmon, R. Floyd — Died  
     at Columbus, Ohio;  
     Buried at Camp Chase,  
     Confederate Cemetery  
 Harmon, R. J.  
 Harmon, Thomas B. —  
     Captain — Killed 1864  
     Woodstock  
 Harmon, William Neel —  
     Colonel — Commander  
     of Company F. Bland

Rangers  
 Havens, Alex—Wounded  
 Havens, E. W.  
 Helvey, Henry W. — Died  
     at Columbus, Ohio;  
     Buried at Camp Chase,  
     Confederate Cemetery  
 Helvey, William B.  
 Henshaw, Solomon  
 Hicks, Peter R. — Lt.  
 Hoge, John Milton  
 Hubble, Thomas  
 Hughes, Crockett  
 Kegley, J. G.  
 Kegley, Dr. Mitchell —  
     Captain  
 Kidd, E. S.  
 Kidd, Addison Winston  
 Kidd, John  
 Kidd, William  
 Kitts, A. J.  
 Kitts, Ganom  
 Kitts, J. W.  
 Lambert, Hicam  
 Lambert, Issac  
 Lambert, John  
 Linkous, Ab  
 McNeil, Daniel O.  
 McNeil, Jacob — Captured  
     at Harper's Ferry  
 McNeil, Peter  
 Melvin, George  
 Melvin, John — Captured  
     and Died at Fort Dela-  
     ware, Buried at Finn's  
     Point, New Jersey  
 Melvin, S. A.—Wounded  
 Miller, Abrom F. —  
     Wounded at Flat Top  
     Mountain  
 Mitchell, Timothy E.  
 Morehead, Daniel F.  
 Morehead, William J. —  
     Died In Service  
 Muncy, Tunis  
 Mustard, Allen — 3rd. Lt.



Myer, John  
 Orrison, C. W.  
 Pauley, Hiram  
 Pauley, Ira L., Died at  
     Columbus, Ohio;  
     Buried at Camp Chase,  
     Confederate Cemetery  
 Pauley, J. E.  
 Pauley, J. H.  
 Pauley, L. G.  
 Pauley, W. J.  
 Pegram, G. N.—Captured  
 Pegram, J. H.  
 Pendleton, James  
 Pruett, H. P.  
 Quagley, Giles  
 Reed, Joseph  
 Roach, J. P.  
 Robinett, H. — Died in  
     Service  
 Robinett, F. M.  
 Robinson, — Captain  
 Robinson, Alex — Killed  
     1862 at Monroe, West  
     Virginia  
 Roland, Miles  
 Roland, Sims  
 Russell, William  
 Saunders, Gordon  
 Shannon, William R.  
 Shrader, J. M.  
 Stafford, B. P.  
 Stafford, J.  
 Stafford, J. Montgomery-  
     1st. Lt.  
 Stafford, Montgomery (or

R. M.)  
 Stafford, Ralph A. — Cap-  
     tured at Abbs Valley—  
     Imprisoned at Colum-  
     bus, Ohio  
 Stafford, S.  
 Stafford, S. J. — Died  
     at Columbus Ohio,  
     Buried at Camp Chase,  
     Confederate Cemetery  
 Stafford, William B.  
 Stephens, William  
 Stowers, Sims (or I. F.)  
 Stowers, Warden  
 Stowers, William Hickman  
     (Also Co. F. 48th. Reg.  
     Va. Inf.)  
 Sublett, Allen  
 Suiter, Allen  
 Suiter, Floyd  
 Suiter, Frank  
 Suiter, Peter R.  
 Suiter, Samuel D. — Killed  
     and Buried at Win-  
     chester, Va.  
 Thompson, Crockett  
 Tracy, W. B.  
 Waggoner, Jacob  
 Whalen, Hiram—Wounded  
     at Five Forks  
 Wheeler, Robert  
 Wohlford, George  
 Wright, D. O. — Wounded  
     Battle of Cloyd's Moun-  
     tain

# COMPANY F 45TH. REGIMENT — FERBER'S BRIGADE — BLAND COUNTY

Akers, Calvin	tured at Winchester
Akers, Jesse	Allen, Miller Bane — 2nd
Akers, Moses	Lt.—26th Va. Cavalry
Alderson, F. M. — Pvt.	Anderson, William
Allen, John P.—Pvt. Cap-	Andrews, William

Ashworth, James M.—Cap-  
 tured at Farmville,  
 April, 1865, Prisoner  
 at Port Lookout—died  
 Ashworth, Samuel B. —  
 Killed at Battle of  
 Cloyd's Mountain, May  
 8, 1864  
 Ashworth, S. S.  
 Ashworth, William B. —  
 Wounded at Cloyd's  
 Mountain  
 Austin, I. E. — 1st. Sgt.  
 Austin, William G. —  
 Wounded  
 Bailey, Daniel M.  
 Bailey, S.  
 Bird, Benjamin J.  
 Bird, G. W.  
 Bird, James R.  
 Bird, John R. — Killed at  
 Cloyd's Farm  
 Bird, J. S. H.  
 Bird, P. H. M.  
 Bird, Stephen W.  
 Bird, William A. B.  
 Bogle, E. H.  
 Bogle, F. C.  
 Bogle, M. Fay  
 Brawley, J. H.  
 Britts, S. C.  
 Bruce, Amos — Wounded  
 at White Sulphur Aug.  
 26th, 1863  
 Bruce, Carr  
 Bruce, James H.  
 Bruce, J. C.  
 Bruce, William T.  
 Brown, John R.  
 Burton, James T.  
 Carpenter, Edward L.  
 Carpenter, John C.  
 Carr, G. W. — Pvt. Killed  
 at White Sulphur  
 Springs, Aug. 26, 1863  
 Carver, Daniel

Clark, R. A.  
 Coeburn, Thomas G.  
 Cole, John R.  
 Conley, Guy T.  
 Conley, James F.  
 Crawford, William H.  
 Crockett, Robert R.—Cap-  
 tain—Killed at Cloyd's  
 Farm  
 Crockett, William N.  
 Curtis, Ilahti  
 Curtis, Claiborne  
 Davis, John  
 Davis, Rush  
 Davis, Samuel C.  
 Davis, William  
 Day, J. H.  
 Devor, John  
 Dillow, Samuel — Wound-  
 ed at Piedmont  
 Ditimore, H. P.  
 Dudley, D. A. — Killed at  
 White Sulphur Springs  
 Aug. 26, 1863  
 Dudley, T. — Killed at Dry  
 Creek  
 Fanning, J. A.  
 Fanning, James M.  
 Fanning, W. W.  
 Fannon, O. C. — Died at  
 Camp Morton, Indiana  
 — Buried at Green  
 Lawn Cemetery  
 Felts, J. W.  
 Finley, John D.—2nd. Sgt.  
 Finley, Thomas Nye  
 Foster, James C.  
 French, A. Jack  
 French, B. P.  
 French, Gordon — Killed  
 at Winchester  
 French, Joshua G.  
 Garner, Thomas  
 Grayson, Andrew J.—Cap-  
 tain  
 Grubb, George W.

Hall, John R.  
 Hall, Samuel H.  
 Hamilton, S a u n d e r s —  
     Wounded at Winchester;  
     captured at Fisher's Hill,  
     Md. Prisoner 8 months  
 Hamilton, T. B.  
 Hamilton, W. T.  
 Hanshew, S. H.  
 Hare, William E.  
 Harmon, D. L.  
 Harmon, Wilson  
 Havens, A. J.  
 Havens, Bryant  
 Havens, Hiram  
 Havens, James W.  
 Havens, John W. — 2nd.  
     Sgt.  
 Hearen, Elbert S.  
 Hearn, Harvey  
 Heninger, C. C.  
 Heninger, J. K.  
 Hester, Anderson  
 Hicks, R. S. — Lt. — Cap-  
     tured at Winchester,  
     Prisoner at Fort Dela-  
     ware  
 Holland, Floyd — Died In  
     Prison  
 Hoanker, A. J.  
 Horten, Charles  
 Hunt, Harvey W.  
 Hutsell, Ezra F. — Died at  
     Camp Morton, Indiana  
     — Buried at Green  
     Lawn Cemetery 1864  
 Johnson, H. P.  
 Johnson, Jessie N e w t o n  
     (Also Co. A 4th. Bat-  
     talion and Co. I, 60th  
     Va. Inf.)  
 King, John B.  
 Kitts, A. J.  
 Kitts, Jacob F.  
 Kitts, T. J.  
 Lampert, A. G. — Pvt.  
 Lampert, Joseph G.—Died  
     at Camp Morton, In-  
     diana — Buried at  
     Green Lawn Cemetery  
 Lattin, William  
 Leady, P. C.  
 Lucado, J. — Died in Hos-  
     pital  
 McDonald, George  
 McGinley, Mike — Wound-  
     ed Cloyd's Farm  
 Martin, D. R. — Wounded  
     Cloyd's Farm  
 Martin, M. J.  
 Melvin, S. S.  
 Mizell, J. H.  
 Munsey, Hiram  
 Munsey, J. G.  
 Munsey, John W. — Died  
     1862  
 Munsey, John G.  
 Munsey, M. A.  
 Munsey, T. J.  
 Munsey, William H.  
 Munsey, W. W.—Wounded  
     at Gettysburg  
 Mustard, Harvey R.  
 Mustard, John Thomas  
 Mustard, William G. —  
     Transferred to 8th. Va.  
     Cavalry  
 Mustard, W. D. — Died at  
     Camp Morton, Indiana,  
     Buried at Green Lawn  
     Cemetery  
 Neel, John S.  
 Newberry, Dunn B.  
 Newberry, John W.—Cap-  
     tain, Wounded at Cyn-  
     thia, Kentucky and  
     disappeared in Ky.  
 Nester, Anderson  
 Nicewander, Alexander  
 Nicewander, J. H.  
 Nicewander, William H.

Noel, George W.  
 Noel, William M.  
 Nye, George  
 Patton, John W.  
 Pauley, Albert  
 Pauley, W. G.  
 Pegram, J. Henry  
 Pegram, Thomas L.  
 Price, W. H. — 3rd. Sgt.  
 Pruett, Issac  
 Pruett, J. M. — Wounded  
     at Cloyd's Farm  
 Raines, Cephas  
 Raines, Robert  
 Rea, Henry L.  
 Reed, Joseph  
 Repass, Walter  
 Robinett, Jesreel Z. — Pvt.  
     Captured at Winchester,  
     1865, Died at Ft.  
     Delaware, Buried at  
     Finn's Point, N. J. —  
     Body brought back to  
     Robinett Cemetery  
 Roland, James  
 Rudder, C. M.  
 Smithson, Hilary  
 Stowers, Andrew Jackson  
 Stowers, Colby  
 Stowers, Issac  
 Stowers, George W.  
 Stowers, James Madison—  
     Pvt. Captured at Win-  
     chester  
 Stowers, James M.—Cap-  
     tain  
 Stowers, J. Mod.—Missing  
     in Action, Never  
     Heard Of  
 Stowers, John, Sr.  
 Stowers, John, Jr.  
 Stowers, John C.  
 Stowers, Russell  
 Suiter, Elbert H. — Killed  
     at Cloyd's Mountain  
     May 9, 1864

Suiter, Franklin I.—Cattle  
     Buyer for Confederacy  
 Suiter, S. S. —Lt.—Killed  
     in Battle of Winches-  
     ter 1864  
 Tanner, H. P.  
 Terry, William B.  
 Thomas, George — Killed  
 Thomas, Giles  
 Thompson, Alex  
 Thompson, A. N. 1st. Cpl.  
 Thompson, J. Newton  
 Thompson, B. P.—Wound-  
     ed at White Sulphur,  
     Aug. 26, 1863  
 Thompson, C. G.  
 Thompson, Daniel F.  
 Thompson, E. H.  
 Thompson, E. W., Sr.  
 Thompson, E. W., Jr.  
 Thompson, H. P.  
 Thompson, Jehiel  
 Thompson, J. M. N.  
 Thompson, L. E.  
 Thompson, Robert S.  
 Thompson, V. F.  
 Thompson, William H. —  
     Pvt.  
 Tibba, James A.  
 Tickle, H. B.  
 Turner, Thomas  
 Waddle, Newton  
 Wheeler, James R. —  
     Wounded at Piedmont  
 Wilkinson, A. J.  
 Wilkinson, Jeff  
 Williams, W. C.  
 Wilson, W. D.  
 Wohlford, George—1st. Lt.  
 Wohlford, James  
 Workman, A. G.  
 Wyrick, A. H.  
 Wyrick, Ephriam



Wyrick, L. D. — Killed at  
White Sulphur Springs  
1863

Wyrick, R. B. — Wounded

at White Sulphur  
Springs 1863  
Yearout, W. L.

COMPANY F. 51ST. BLAND COUNTY TIGERS —  
ROLL OF CAPTAIN SAMUEL NEWBERRY COMPANY  
VOLUNTEERS — GARRIEL'S COMPANY — WHOR-  
TON'S BATTALION

Bales, Charles C. — Pvt.

Bean, W. G.

Been, Jefferson — Pvt.

Been, Saunders C. — Pvt.

Been, Uriah — Pvt.

Been, William J.

Bird, William A. B. — 3rd  
Cpl.

Blackard, Granvil — Pvt.

— Died in 1863.

Bogle, Creed F.

Bogle, John Henderson —  
Killed Feb. 15, 1862 at  
Fort Donaldson

Bogle, Roy

Bottomly, James P. — Pvt.

Bottomly, Robert — Pvt.

Died 1864.

Brown, James — Pvt.

Bruce, Moses K. — Pvt.

Burcham, W. E. — Pvt.

Cameron, Jacob

Cameron, John G. — Pvt.

Killed 1861.

Carter, Richard R.

Carter, Saunders —  
Wounded

Carter, Waller

Cassell, John M. — Pvt.

Compton, William D.

Crabtree, Abraham V. —  
Pvt. — Killed 1862 at Fort  
Donaldson.

Crawford, Bennett A. —  
Pvt.

Crews, J. — Died in Ser-  
vice.

Crutchfield, Thomas A. —  
Pvt. — Wounded 1864  
at Winchester.

Crutchfield, William —  
Pvt.

Dalton, J. W. — Killed and  
Buried at Mt. Jackson,  
Shenandoah County.

Dalton, Lewis C. — Pvt.

Dalton, Shadrick — Killed  
1864 at Winchester.

Davis, Eli — Pvt. — Killed  
1864.

Davis, Harvey — Pvt.

Davis, John M.

Davis, Newton

Devor, George — Pvt.

Devor, James — Pvt.

Dillow, James A. — Pvt.

Ewald, James — Pvt.

Field, W. D.

Fisher, Jas. A. — 1st Lt.

— Wounded 1864.

Fusher, Jacob F.

Foglesong, Charles — Pvt.  
— Died 1861 in West  
Virginia.

Forbes, Thomas — Captur-  
ed 1864 in Maryland.

Fortner, William H. — 2nd  
Cpl.

Fox, Mathias A. — 3rd  
Sgt.

Fulcher, A. T. — Died in 1861.

Groseclose, Adam D. —

Pvt. — Captured at Winchester in 1864.

Groseclose, David — Pvt.

— Captured at Winchester in 1864.

Groseclose, Henry — Pvt.

Groseclose, Jacob — Pvt.

Wounded and captured in 1864 at Winchester.

Groseclose, J. A. T. — 3rd

Lt. — Captured 1864.

Groseclose, John —

Wounded and Captured 1865 in Waynesboro.

Groseclose, William H. —

Pvt. — Captured 1865 at Waynesboro.

Hager, Alem — Pvt.

Hager, Jacob J. — Pvt. —

Wounded 1864 at Winchester.

Hager, James R. — Pvt.

Hager, William H. — Pvt.

Halsey, Clinton — Pvt.

Hall, A. C.

Hancock, Alexander —

Pvt.

Hancock, James H.

Hancock, Pleasant T. —

Pvt.

Hanshew, Daniel — Pvt.

Hanshew, George W.

Hanshew, John T.

Hanshew, Samuel — Pvt.

Harman, Thomas B. —

Captain — Killed at Cloyd's Farm.

Hedrick, William

Helvey, Franklin G. — Pvt.

Hill, W. D.

Hinkle, Jacob — Pvt.

Honaker, William C. —

Captured at Winchester in 1864.

Hubble, William J. — Pvt.

Hudson, Charles J. — Pvt.

Hudson, George T. M. —

1st Corp. — Died in Service.

Jonas, Daniel K.

Kidd, Elbert S. — Pvt.

Kimberling, John T. —

Pvt. — Killed at Snigger's Ferry in 1864.

Kinser, George W. — Pvt.

Kirby, John W. — Pvt.

Kinder, John, Pvt.

Kitts, Henry J. — Pvt.

Kitts, Samuel L.

Lampert, George W. —

Pvt.

Lampert, William — Pvt.

— Captured at Winchester in 1864.

McFarlane, Lorenzo Dow

Pvt. — Wounded.

McFarlane, Stephen S. —

Pvt. — Wounded

Died in 1862 at Memphis, Tenn.

Martin, George W. — Pvt.

Meadows, Frank A. — Pvt.

— Wounded at Chancellorsville, Va.

Morris, J. M.

Moyers, John

Neel, Alexander — Pvt.

Neel, Andrew J. — Pvt. —

Captured 1864 in Md.

Neel, Thomas J. — 3rd Lt.

— 1st Lt.

Neel, Peter P. — Pvt.

Neel, George — Pvt.

Neel, William M.

Neese, James M. — Pvt.

Neese, David C. — Pvt.

Neighbors, James — Pvt.  
     — Wounded at New  
     Market in 1864.  
 Newberry, Samuel H. —  
     Captain — Wounded  
     severely at Fort Don-  
     aldson.  
 Oxley, Stanford H. — 4th  
     Sgt.  
 Painter, David S. — Pvt.  
 Painter, John — Pvt.  
 Patterson, Stephen H. —  
     Pvt.  
 Patterson, Samuel F. —  
     2nd Sgt.  
 Patterson, S. J.  
 Pauley, Mitchell — Pvt. —  
     Killed at Winchester  
     in 1864.  
 Phipps, J.  
 Pruett, H. N.  
 Pugh, R. F.  
 Repass, Joseph — Pvt.  
 Repass, Rufus B. — Pvt.  
 Repass, Sidney M. — Died  
     at Lewisburg, W. Va.  
     Attended execution of  
     John Brown.  
 Repass, William G. — 1st  
     Sgt. — Captain.  
 Richard, John R.  
 Rose, Cornelius — Pvt.  
 Rose, H. J. — Pvt.  
 Sharitz, Stephen A.  
 Shelton, George — Pvt.  
 Shewey, A. W.  
 Simpkins, Monroe — Pvt.  
 Spangler, Andrew — 1st  
     Lt.  
 Spangler, Henry M.  
 Spangler, James — Pvt.  
     — Wounded at New  
     Market in 1864.  
 Spangler, Stephen — Pvt.  
 Spangler, William J.  
 Sprinkle, Hezekiah — Pvt.  
 Sprinkle, John D. — Pvt.  
     — Captured 1865 at  
     Waynesboro.  
 Sprinkle, William Harrison  
     — Pvt. — Captured  
     1865 at Waynesboro.  
 Steel, Andrew  
 Steel, Daniel R. — 2nd Lt.  
 Steel, Eli — Pvt.  
 Steel, Samuel — Pvt.  
 Sult, P. J.  
 Sult, William — Pvt.  
 Swacker, James — Pvt.  
 Terry, S. M.  
 Thomas, Abraham F. —  
     Pvt.  
 Thorn, Micajah A. — Sgt.  
 Thompson, Jehiel — Pvt.  
 Tibbs, Amassa A. — Pvt.  
     — Wounded and Cap-  
     tured 1864 at Bruce-  
     town.  
 Tibbs, F. M.  
 Tibbs, John — Pvt.  
 Tibbs, William — Pvt. —  
     Wounded in Tennessee  
     1863.  
 Tickle, H. B.  
 Umbarger, John F. — Lt.  
     — Wounded 1864 at  
     Cole Harbor.  
 Umbarger, Peter — Pvt. —  
     Wounded 1864 at Lee  
     Town.  
 Waddle, James — Pvt. —  
     Died 1862 in Memphis.  
 Waddle, David — Pvt.  
 Waddle, W. G. — Pvt.  
 Wilson, James M. — Pvt.  
 Wilkinson, J. L.  
 Williams, Pat — Pvt.  
 Wilson, John L. — Pvt.

Wilson, Joseph — Pvt. —  
Wounded 1861 in West  
Virginia.

Wilson, Thomas O. — Pvt.  
— Captured 1865 in  
Waynesboro.

Workman, James K. P.  
(or R. P.)

COMPANY G. 36TH. REGIMENT — INFANTRY —  
SMITH'S BRIGADE — BLAND COUNTY — Mustered  
into service at Rocky Gap, Virginia, and placed under the  
command of CAPTAIN HENRY CASPER GROSECLOSE

Akers, Jesse R. — Pfc.  
Akers, Louis — Pfc.  
Bales, Charles C.  
Bales, Enoch G.  
Bentley, B. H. — Cpl.  
Booth, Louis  
Booth, Peter  
Broils, Alexander — 5th  
Sgt.  
Broils, Lewis — 4th Sgt.  
Broyles, L. L. — Pfc. —  
Wounded at Winchester.  
Bruce, Harold F.  
Bruce, James H.  
Bruce, Jehiel M. — 2nd Lt.  
Cameron, David S.  
Cameron, Joseph W.  
Compton, James W. — Lt.  
Co. A, 4th Battalion  
Corner, James M.  
Crabtree, James  
Crabtree, Joseph  
Crabtree, J. H.  
Crabtree, Reece  
Dettamore, Taylor  
Dillman, George, Jr.  
Dillman, J. D. — Wounded.  
Dillman, John L.  
Dillman, Samuel  
Duncan, Joseph  
Eagle, Samuel M.  
Fanning, W. W.

Fletcher, M. A.  
Foglesong, Elias  
Foglesong, Henry H.  
Foglesong, Henry S.  
Foglesong, Joseph  
Fortner, Thomas — Pfc.  
Fox, Stephen  
Groseclose, A. D. — Pfc.  
Groseclose, Eli F. — 1st  
Sgt.  
Groseclose, Henry Casper  
— Captain — Captur-  
ed at Winchester in  
1863, Released in 1865.  
Imprisoned at Fort  
Delaware.  
Groseclose, J. A. T. — Lt.  
Groseclose, Peter  
Hanley, John T.  
Harmon, Addison  
Harner, J. J. — Captain.  
Haynes, Harvey  
Henderson, James P. —  
Died at Fort Delaware  
as Prisoner, Buried at  
Finn's Point, N. J.  
Henegar, James P.  
Hounshell, Hiram  
Hunt, John W.  
Hylton, John B.  
Johnson, Thomas M.  
Jonas, Christopher — 1st  
Cpl.

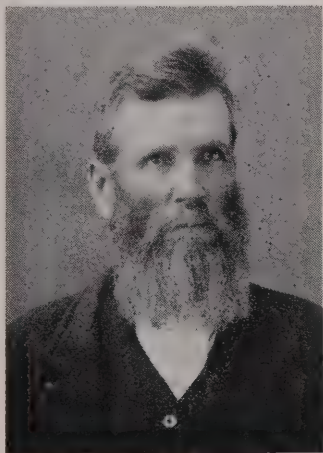


Keeling, A. J.  
 Keister, Henry  
 Kidd, A. T.  
 Kidd, A. R.  
 Kidd, Ray  
 Kidd, Thompson  
 Kidd, William S.  
 King, John T.  
 Kitts, A. M.  
 Kitts, Harvey G. —  
     Wounded.  
 Kitts, Stephen  
 Lampert, Franklin  
 Lampert, Gideon  
 Lampert, John  
 Lampert, James A.  
 Lampert, James F.  
 Lampert, Stephen — 4th  
     Cpl.  
 Lampert, William — Cap-  
     tured at Winchester in  
     1864.  
 Leonard, Franklin  
 Lewis, R. B. — Wounded  
     at Winchester in 1864.  
 Lindamood, J. H.  
 McFarland, J. A. — Pvt.  
 Maxwell, James E.  
 Miller, Jacob  
 Morris, S. H.  
 Muncy, James H. — Lt.  
     Militia — Wounded  
     at Winchester in 1864.  
 Muncy, Jacob — 3rd Cpl.  
 Muncy, Skidmore  
 Munsey, J. H.  
 Mustard, Estill — Killed at  
     Battle of New Market.  
 Mustard, Jasper J.  
 Neil, James  
 Neil, James H.  
 Neil, Madison  
 Neil, Maxwell A.  
 Nosier, A. J.  
 Nye, John W. — Captain  
     — Dentist.  
 Nye, W. P. — Captain —  
     Dentist.  
 Patterson, Newton  
 Pauley, Nat  
 Peek, Charles  
 Pegram, Henry  
 Penley, Brackson H. —  
     3rd Sgt.  
 Powers, Creed W.  
 Price, Z.  
 Pruett, W. T.  
 Read, Mark  
 Repass, Austin  
 Repass, Gustavus — Cpl.  
 Repass, Jack  
 Sands, Jacob  
 Scott, John M. — 2nd Sgt.  
     — Killed at Cedar  
     Creek.  
 Smyth, A. H.  
 Spangler, Augustus  
 Spangler, D. S. — Died at  
     Fort Delaware as Pris-  
     oner, Buried at Finn's  
     Point, N. J.  
 Spangler, George  
 Spangler, Joel H. — 3rd Lt.  
 Spangler, William H.  
 Sprinkle, Stephen  
 Stafford, Gratton  
 Stafford, Jeff  
 Stafford, W. B.  
 Steele, Henry W. —  
     Wounded at Winches-  
     ter.  
 Tabor, William J.  
 Thompson, Dave H. —  
     Wounded in Service.  
 Thompson, Henry G. —  
     2nd Cpl.  
 Thompson, J. W.  
 Thompson, William W.  
 Tickle, Daniel L.  
 Townley, John William  
     Summerfield

Umbarger, Henry —  
Wounded.  
Umbarger, John — Died a  
Prisoner and Buried  
at Point Lookout, Md.  
Umbarger, William  
Waddle, Granville  
Waggoner, J. E. — Died in  
1862.  
Wagner, G. E.  
Walker, Benjamin Stuart  
Walker, Daniel Alexander  
— Major.  
Walker, Thomas F. —  
Captain.  
Walker, William Pierce

Walthall, Robert C.  
Wheeler, Kennedy F. —  
Prisoner, Died at Fort  
Delaware, Buried at  
Finn's Point, N. J.  
Whitley, Charles  
Wilson, Charles D.  
Wilson, Harve  
Wilson, James E.  
Wilson, Edward  
Wynn, Mathias F.  
Wynn, Peter  
Wyrick, Hiram  
Wyrick, James  
Wyrick, John

### BLAND COUNTY MISCELLANEOUS LISTING OF CIVIL WAR SOLDIERS AND COMPANIES



**Capt. Henry H. Newberry**

Ashworth, William W. — 10th  
Virginia Cavalry  
Barnitz, John A. — Co. F, 14th  
Virginia Cavalry  
Baumgardner, M. L.  
Bernard, Samuel H. — Co. G,  
Dunn's Battalion  
Brawley, T. J. — Co. I, 16th  
Virginia Cavalry  
Bruce, Daniel Hoge — Co. E,  
7th Virginia Cavalry  
Davidson, John Allen — Cap-  
tain, Co. H, 8th Virginia  
Cavalry. Wounded at Win-  
chester, captured at Five  
Forks and escaped.

Dodd, Lorenzo R. — 22nd Virginia Infantry. Wounded at  
Dry Creek, W. Va. Captured at Lewisburg.  
Dunn, D. Washington  
Fortner, John — Co. B, Virginia Regiment.  
Frye, Abraham

Grayson, James Wayne — Captain, Lieut. Col., Virginia Militia.  
 Green, Robert Crutchfield — Smith's Blues, commanded by Pendleton.  
 Harmon, Daniel H. — Co. H, 16th Virginia Cavalry.  
 Harmon, James — Co. E, 50th Virginia Infantry.  
 Hoge, James Meek — Co. A, 4th Battalion.  
 Hornbarger, William P. — Co. C, 54th Virginia Infantry.  
 Kegley, Gordon — Captain  
 Kidd, James — Co. C, 23rd Battalion-Infantry.  
 Muncy, Andrew Jackson — Captain — In Battle of Cloyd's Mountain and Saltville.  
 Mustard, Harvey R.  
 Mustard, Samuel P. — Captain.  
 Mustard, Wesley Newton — Cavalry. In charge of 4th Commissary Department.  
 Mustard, William P. — Captain, 198 Reg., 25th Brigade, 5th Div. Militia. Commissioned by Governor of Virginia.  
 Newberry, Henry H. — Captain, Co. H, Cavalry. Imprisoned at Johnson's Island, Ohio. Captured at Staunton.  
 Newberry, R. L.  
 Repass, Dr. Elias — Captain. Imprisoned at Camp Chase, Ohio. Alleghany County Jackson's Brigade, 47th Virginia Cavalry.  
 Repass, Dr. I. M. — Captain, Wise Brigade, McComas Battery.  
 Shufflebarger, Newton — Co. E, 30th Virginia SCA. Wounded at Winchester. Imprisoned at Point Lookout. Exchanged and wounded again at Bull's Gap, Tenn.  
 Starks, James M. — Co. C, 23rd Battalion. Wounded at Staunton in 1864.  
 Taylor, Rev. James T. — Co. I, 50th Infantry. Captured at Carnifex Ferry in 1861.  
 Warner, D. C. — Co. C, 23rd Battalion.  
 Williams, Samuel W. — Private, 5th Virginia Cavalry.  
 Wohlford, William — Captured by Woodford's Cavalry, Maryville, Tenn. Imprisoned at Rock Island, Ill.  
 Wohlford, Thomas — Hospital Steward. Made prisoner by Sheridan's Army.  
 Wynn, Joseph H. — Co. I, 60th Virginia Infantry.

## INTERESTING INCIDENTS OF THE CIVIL WAR

Soldiers of both Southern and Northern armies, at different times, were camped at the old Compton home place en route to Wytheville and Battle of Cloyd's Mountain. Mrs. Compton held her saddle mare at the kitchen door to prevent it being confiscated. A Northern officer told her to take it away so that as they left the soldiers would not take it. A servant in the home took it to the mountain for the night.

A widow of a Northern officer came through the Gap in a buggy with a servant on the way to Wytheville to pick up the body of her husband who had been killed. She spent the night, both coming and going, at the Compton home. The husband may have been Toland.

Two presidents-to-be took part in the Battle of Cloyd's Mountain, McKinley and Hayes.

At the outbreak of the War Between the States, Newton Shufflebarger, who had recently moved to the county from Pulaski, thought that his family would be safer at his home in Pulaski County, as he was drafted into the Confederate Army from there. He boarded up the newly-erected cabin on the present home site, loaded his belongings, wife Ann, and family on his wagon, and left his cabin closed for the duration of the war.

Not being able to take all of his horses with him, Mr. Shufflebarger corraled them in a secluded spot, called the "Mill Dam field" behind his cabin, and there he left them unattended, not knowing what would be their fate while he was away. Several years later, when the war was over and he returned, he found to his surprise that the horses were still in the corral, their colts chasing after them. Surely this was a blessed sight and a bright hope at a time when the country had seen so much loss and destruction.



## LAST SURVIVING BLAND COUNTY NATIVE SPANISH AMERICAN WAR VETERAN



Pictured at left as a young man is Mr. Luther Brown Havens, last surviving Bland County native Spanish American War veteran. Mr. Havens, the son of James and Elizabeth Hamilton Havens, was born on May 15, 1878, at Mechanicsburg, Bland County, Virginia. He spent his childhood years in this area and went west at the age of 18. Young Mr. Havens enlisted as a Private in Co. I, 8th U. S. Infantry of the Regular Army at Kansas City, Missouri. He was later transferred to Company B, 28th Reg-

iment of the Infantry and sent to the Philippines. There his duty consisted of guarding at an old Spanish underground prison, and two months of battles on the firing line. Small cannons were among the weapons they used and these were loaded with iron and all types of scrap since they did not have regular load. Mr. Havens was walking post the day General Aguinaldo surrendered, and, having spent two years and six months in the Philippines, he then returned to the States and passed in review of Teddy Roosevelt in Oakland, California. His pay while in the service averaged \$12.00 a month and his discharge papers, given to him at Fort Snelling, Minn. on Dec. 6, 1904, listed his character as excellent. He was given a life membership in the 28th U. S. Infantry Association.

After his service career, Mr. Havens married Miss Nannie Childress of Danville, Virginia, on July 4, 1907. They returned to Mechanicsburg to make their home and while living there he drove a team of horses for Wohlford Brothers, hauling from Dublin. Mr. Havens then moved to Gary, West Virginia, where he was employed by the U. S. Coal and Coke Company for 18 years. He returned to Bland in 1932 after the death of his wife.

Mr. Havens married his second wife, Miss Cynthia Jane Fanning, on July 4, 1933. They reside in "The Slide"

vicinity on State Route No. 42 in Bland County.

Although Mr. Havens never had children of his own, he helped to rear a niece, Dorothy Kelley, and three nephews, Earnest Childress, Wallace Melvin and Cecil Melvin.

### **SPANISH WAR VET AFTER YEARS OF WORK AT TIMBER CUTTING TAKES IT EASY BUT DEMANDS PLENTY OF CHEWING TOBACCO**

**(“Dad” Barton, nearing 93 years of age)**

J. A. Barton, better known as “Dad”, was born in North Carolina, October 13, 1867. His parents moved to Rogersville, Tennessee, and there he spent his boyhood and early manhood. At the age of 29 he joined the army and served three years, including service in the Spanish-American War. He received his honorable discharge and started roaming the western country. After a few years, mostly spent in Oklahoma, he wandered back east and met Arch McNeil and started working in the mountains of Southwest Virginia. At this job he spent thirty years. After Virginia Hardwood Lumber Company finished in Bland County, he spent several years working for S. D. Suiter, of Suiter, Virginia, while making his home with J. J. Umbarger for the past eighteen years. He joined the New Hope Church and now, at the age of 92, “Dad” Barton is an easy-going old soldier and all that he demands is plenty of chewing tobacco.

### **KILLED IN WORLD WAR I AND II**

In World War I, 188 men and one woman, Bertha Thompson, served in the armed forces from Bland County. Of this number, twelve were killed or died while in service. Their names are as follows:

E. F. Billings, S. N. Brown, M. T. Burton, H. C. Collins, C. O. Fanning, A. R. Hull, H. T. McNutt, A. D. Pendle-

ton, J. D. Pulliam, W. P. Richardson, W. A. Sublet, J. N. Tickle.

World War II — Those killed or missing in action were as follows:

Lieut. Jeff Troy Morehead, son of Lake D. and Elizabeth Kate Morehead, of Hollybrook. He was killed in an airplane collision at Bakersfield, California.

William Wallace Bogle, son of Andrew Napoleon and Luvenia Pruett Bogle, of Ceres, was killed near Bourg Neuf, France, Sept. 7, 1944.

James Edward Dillard, son of Earl and Mattie Belle Dillard, Bland, killed in action in France, Feb. 19, 1945.

James Otis Ramsey, of Hollybrook, son of Lonnie N. and Leona Miller Ramsey, killed in action at Anzio Beach, Italy, March 8, 1944.

James Tarter Sadler, son of James A. and Pinkie Frye Sadler, Bland, died of wounds somewhere in New Guinea, Aug. 8, 1944.

Leroy Thomas Farmer, Bland, son of Harve Howe and Ada Belle Farmer, missing in action near Moselle River, Sept. 12, 1944.

Owen Thomas Wilson, son of Dewey Kent and Annabel Barger Wilson, Ceres, killed April 22, 1943, on Ellice Island.

Robert Oren Repass, Ceres, son of Morris D. and Virginia Umbarger Repass, killed in Luxembourg, Jan. 25, 1945.

Earl George Pauley, Bastian, son of Albert S. and Ethel G. Pauley, killed in action somewhere in Italy about the 18th of Feb., 1944.

Clifford Andrew Willis, Rocky Gap, son of J. T. and Hattie Mae Willis, killed in action in Italy, April 18, 1945.

Lieut. James Leslie Burk, Ceres, son of James C. and Alice Davis Burk, killed by enemy gunfire in Normandy, France, July 13, 1944.

Frank Forrest Kitts, Jr., Ceres, son of Frank F. and Helen Creger Kitts, killed in action in Germany, Nov. 17, 1944.

William Howe Sadler, Bland, son of Hayes G. and Nellie Hancock Sadler, killed in action in Germany, Dec. 2, 1944.

William Larry Stone, Bland, son of Robert Boaz and Marie Spencer Stone, died of wounds received in action on Nov. 1, 1944. His place of death was Germeter, Germany.

Andrew Gilbert Hancock, Rocky Gap, son of Charles Seffey and Lessie Kidd Hancock, killed in action at the time of the sinking of the U.S.S. YMS-71, April 3, 1945.

Zacharia Whitten Strock, Jr., Crandon, son of Z. W. and Hassie Mitchell Strock, killed in Italy, January 26, 1944.

Captain William Artie Burton, Kimberling, son of Charles R. and Bessie Dunnigan Burton, killed at Willin-stein, Luxemburg, Dec. 17, 1944.

Captain Arthur Roland Porterfield, Bland, son of A. R. and Cynthia Brown Porterfield, killed Dec. 23, 1942 in Liberia while carrying wounded men to the hospital.

Robert Thurman Miller, Kimberling, son of Robert M. and Mary Elizabeth Miller, killed by German Marine fire in Holland, April 5, 1945.



James Moore Walker, Mechanicsburg, son of Mr. and  
Mrs. H. C. Walker, killed at Cherbourg June 13, 1944.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CHURCHES AND MINISTERS OF BLAND COUNTY

The most authentic account of what was perhaps the first attempt by the Methodists to have an organized church and religious services in what is now Bland County, is contained in "Holston Methodism From Its Origin to the Present Time," Volume II, Page 151, by Reverend R. N. Price.

Long before the formation of the county when the country was only sparsely settled, the Word of God was carried to the people by dedicated men who met in the log cabins and in brush arbors to preach and to lead these sturdy men and women to an acceptance of the Christian way of life.

The home of Captain Elias Harmon, known as "Holly Brook", was used for public worship until a church was built in that neighborhood. Captain Harmon was born July 11, 1780, and joined the Methodist Church in 1811. Bishop Francis Asbury and Bishop McKindree were entertained and preached in his home.

The home of Joshua Bruce on Walkers Creek was also used for "Class Meetings" and preaching services.

Sometime in the late eighteenth century a group of God-fearing citizens met for worship in the home of a Mr. Nicewander (situated near Crandon, now owned by Kathleen Wohlford Newberry) coming from near and afar. This home became known as the Nicewander Meeting House.

On July 4, 1812, in a worship service, John Grayson Cecil, Samuel Newberry, Joshua Bruce, and Zachariah Mitchell were licensed to preach. These four ministers, going their separate ways, met forty years later on July 4th and preached in the building which later became Byrnes Chapel. The Nicewander Meeting House had been destroyed in the meantime.

Seventeen years afterward on July 4th, Zachariah Mitchell, the lone survivor of the four, preached the "funeral sermon" for his departed brethren; then a few

years later he, too, crossed over the river to rest. Although dead, their influence still lives. This group of followers of Christ grew, using a building owned by David Byrnes (whose posterity still reside in Bland County). The following is an extract of the deed David Byrnes gave to the present Byrnes Chapel Methodist Church:

This indenture made this 19th day of April, 1843, between David Byrnes of the County of Giles and State of Virginia of the one part, and Lewis Neil, William Mustard, John Crawford, John Mustard, Elias H. Neil, Daniel Harmon, and Daniel Hoge, all of the County of Giles but Daniel Hoge, of the County of Wythe and State aforesaid, Trustees, etc.

Granted as follows:

"A certain lot of land situated, lying and being in the County of Giles and state aforesaid and bounded as follows, beginning on a cliff of rocks in the branch some six or eight poles east from Mechanicsburg meeting house, thence to run parallel with the four squares of the said meeting house, so as to include one acre of land, keeping at equal distance from each side and ends of said house together with all and singular the house, woods, waters, ways, privileges, and appurtenances thereto belonging or in any way appertaining unto them, the said Lewis Neil et al and their successors in office forever that as they have interest and build a house or a place of worship for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America known by the name of Mechanicsburg Meeting House."

(The above is all the boundary or description set forth in the deed.)



### BYRNES CHAPEL

Among the earlier ministers who preached in this church were Revs. Gentry, J. O. Stradley, C. L. Stradley, and Rev. John Crockett.

The present church is the third house of worship known as Byrnes Chapel. The first, a log structure, burned, and a second was erected on the same site which was used a number of years. Bro. Stradley, then pastor of the church, suggested building a new church which met with the disapproval of Robert L. Newberry, an exhorter but a pious old gentleman commonly known as Bro. Bob. As opposition grew, Bro. Stradley took matters in his own hands. A passerby seeing Bro. Stradley on the roof of the church with an ax in his hand, timbers flying left and right, knew who was the victor. A few days later a friend meeting Bro. Bob asked, "What happened to your church?" The old fellow, not feeling too kindly over the outcome, replied, "Oh! see, see, old Stradle Bug tore it down." But to everyone's joy, not too long afterward a new and more beautiful church was built, which is the present Byrnes Chapel.

The church purchased a dwelling in Mechanicsburg from Burton and Songer in about the year 1907 to be used as a parsonage. The pastors who served this church were



Rev. G. T. Jordon, who was first to live in the parsonage, followed in order by Reverends S. K. Bird, Will Umberger, W. M. Ellis, W. N. Baker, K. G. Munsey, R. L. Parks, W. M. Ross, L. D. Yost, A. A. Angle, Mr. Jones, J. C. Clark, Jay Osborne, Virgil Anderson, M. G. Goodpasture, Jr., James Crabtree, S. S. Phipps, George Chandler, John Atkinson, and Lewis N. Kegley.

The church voted to sell the parsonage in 1958 and build a new one on a lot purchased from John C. Stafford on Route 42 at Mechanicsburg, where our present pastor, Rev. Kegley, now resides.

## DEEDS FOR CHURCHES

The first land deeded for a church after the formation of Bland County was given by Randolph Grayson and his wife, Cynthia, to Randolph Hall, Stephen W. Bird and A. J. Muncy, acting trustees of the Mount Sion Baptist Church. The deed described the parcel of land as containing one-half acre and lying on the Walkers Creek and Holston Turnpike, about one-half mile east of the town of Seddon — deed dated December 5, 1867. There was a log house which was used both for church and public school, but has long since disappeared. This lot is near the present home of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Morehead.

The next deed of record in Bland County was made the 19th day of November, 1869, from Hiram Stinson and Ruth, his wife, to Joseph Reed, William Stinson, Allen Sublett, William Warner and Joseph Bogle, as trustees for the Methodist Episcopal Church South and their successors in office. This tract of land is described as "containing one acre and lying in the County of Bland on the waters of Walkers Creek where Mt. Zion Church now stands, for the use of the above named Church, as long as used by the Church for a place of public service." Mt. Zion Church, now on the Mechanicsburg Charge, has had a long and useful life and has been throughout the years an influence for good in the community.

The third deed of record in Bland County was made December 25, 1870 from Richard Gregory and Julia, his wife, Isaac F. Stowers and Virginia, his wife, Hiram Peery and wife, to Thomas F. Walker, James M. Compton, Colby

Stowers, William E. Neal and Richard S. Gregory, Trustees. This is described as "a certain lot or parcel of land lying on Clear Fork of Wolf Creek in the County of Bland and State of Virginia and supposed to contain one acre, more or less, for the use and benefit of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, for the public worship of God, provided that the same may be used for the purpose of Teaching Literary Schools, until such time as District School Houses are built, a majority of the Trustees concurring. Provided further that the teacher of such school shall be bound in writing for avoidable damage, and in further trust and confidence that the said Trustees shall forever hereafter permit legally authorized ministers and preachers of the said Methodist E. Church South to preach and expound God's holy word therein."

The original Wessendonck Church was built in 1855 and was known as Pleasant Grove. This was a one room log building which was also used as a school building.

On May 26th, 1906, Walter Wessendonck, his wife, and Max Wessendonck made a deed to J. W. Whittaker, S. V. Morris, and Pendleton Burton, Trustees of "the Pleasant Grove Methodist Episcopal Church South". This tract of land was described as being a part of the farm known as "Cluxi" and containing about one-half acre. A suitable Church building was to be erected which was to be used, kept and maintained solely as a place of Divine worship, for the use of the ministry and membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church South.

The conveyance was made upon the following conditions and subject to the following provisions: "Should the use of said premises as a place of divine worship by the aforesaid church be discontinued and said premises be not maintained or kept as a place of such divine worship for a period of three years, then, in that event, the said described premises hereby granted, and all interest in the title thereto, shall revert to the said Walter Wessendonck, his heirs or assigns."

The Wessendonck Church is on the Mechanicsburg Charge and has been active through the years.

Dr. John H. Hoge, in a series of articles entitled "Reminiscences," makes the following reference to the "Nicewander Meeting House" or "Campground":

"The first campground ever built on Walkers Creek was at Mechanicsburg. I have but little recollection of it for it was discontinued a few years after father moved there, which was about 1820. I well recollect the old tents that stood there for years after they were deserted. It is said that Lorenzo Dow preached there. The second Campground of which I have recollection was on Walkers Creek, located on the south side and opposite 'The Big Spring' just above where William Carr once lived. Prominent among the leading Methodists and regular supporters of the camp meetings was John Carr, who lived but a short distance from the camp ground. Within bounds of 20 or 30 miles, people would flock to the camp meetings. Families living at a great distance would put their provisions in their wagons and set out for the meeting — some riding, some walking, and when they would arrive they immediately set up a cloth tent and remain for the duration of the meeting. Every one went to church in those days, including the old as well as the babies. After the boys and girls were of courting age, the girls would carry their shoes until they would get near the church, at which time they would put their shoes back on. Parents watched their children at church and made them behave. There was no jumping up and running around. Well do I recollect one time I got up and started out just to see how I would feel. I was pretty close to the "amen corner" and as I started out the preacher stopped me. I thought my brogans made more fuss than I had ever heard them make before. The preacher remarked: 'That young man thinks he is something; just look at him strut'. Of course everyone looked at me and I did not go back into the church again that day. My father settled with me when we got home.

"We had no duds in that day and time, no cigarettes, no high-heeled boots and no stand-up collars. Captain Ralph Stafford, a resident of Mechanicsburg, a veteran of the Revolutionary War and a mighty good and religious man, had just bought a new hat. The next Sunday he went to a meeting at the "Nicewander Meeting House" and placed his fine hat under a bench near the wall. Some tobacco chewers who were sitting on either side of him spat against the wall and down it ran into his hat. When the meeting was over, Mr. Stafford picked up his hat, walked to the door, and put on his hat. The ambeer came running down his face and what a sight it made. Another one of the old soldiers of Christ was David Byrnes. Next

to my parents, I owe my religious training to Mr. Byrnes. Later in life he moved to Wise County."

## METHODIST CHURCHES IN THE BLAND AREA



In the early part of the nineteenth century there was a Methodist congregation in and around what is now Bland. At this early date no church had been constructed, but preaching services were held in the various homes.

The first Methodist Church to be erected in this area was Newberry's Chapel. In the year 1849 a deed was made from John Henderson and George W. Suiter to Samuel Newberry, Randolph Grayson, James Bruce, Allen T. Newberry and Isaah Bruce, Trustees, to one and one-half acres of land, on the waters of Walkers Creek, in the County of Wythe and State of Virginia, "in trust that they shall erect and build, or cause to be erected and built thereon, a meeting house or place of worship to be the property of the Methodist Episcopal Church South." For many years the church which was erected served all of the Methodists, as well as other denominations in the area, but as the little village of Seddon began to grow, it seemed practical for the congregation to be divided, so plans were made for a place of worship in or near the village; however, Newberry's Chapel continued an active church for many years until discontinued about 1958.

The site selected for the church building in the village was the same that the present church structure occupies,



the land being given by the Grayson family; however, a deed to the property was not made until 1879. This deed was made from A. J. Grayson, Trustee, for the heirs of James W. Grayson, deceased, to A. J. Grayson, B. H. Penley, John W. McGinnis, B. F. Petree. J. F. Kitts, J. Henderson Bruce and Wilson C. Hatcher, Trustees, and states that there was at this time a church building on the land conveyed. The first building was a small log structure, and there is little doubt that it was constructed before the Civil War started. The original building was torn down and a new one constructed about 1879. While this building was in the process of construction, worship services were held on the first floor of the old Masonic Lodge Hall.

The new building was a rather small one-room frame structure. In 1902 the church was remodeled as it now stands; however, Sunday School class rooms and a central heating plant have been added in recent years.

### Central

The class of Central Church was formed, in part, from the class rolls of the Valley View and Hoge's Chapel Churches. The deed for the Hoge's Chapel Church was made June 12th, 1879, from Rhoda and Sarah B. Helvey, to John H. Hoge, B. F. Petree, O. C. Harmon, Robert C. Green, Jessie W. Bruce and Addison B. Pauley, Trustees, to "a certain parcel of land upon which a church has been erected, called Hoge's Chapel, containing two acres of land, also an acre of land lying north of their dwelling house, as a burying ground, which is now used for that purpose."

These churches were abandoned and the one church organized with the intent of serving both communities.

The deed to Central Church was made February 16th, 1917, from Marcia J. Harmon and A. T. Harmon, her husband, to E. M. Muncy, M. B. Tickle, O. V. Harmon, C. R. Bird and J. S. Ashworth. Rev. J. W. Morris was the preacher in charge at the time Central Church was built.

### Trinity

From the rolls of the Old Bethel Church (which is mentioned elsewhere in this chapter) and Gravel Hill School house came the class roll of Trinity Church. The deed to this property was made December 16th, 1910, from

F. S. Stowers and wife, to M. S. Kirby, F. S. Stowers, S. L. Repass, John W. Kidd and A. J. Shufflebarger, Trustees. The parcel of land was described as containing about one acre. The premises were deeded in trust that "they shall be used, kept, maintained and disposed of as a place of Divine Worship for the use of the ministry and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church South."

The Trustees were bound under the terms of the deed to erect a church on the lot within a year. This they did, as the church was dedicated in 1911. The first Sunday School Superintendent was John W. Kidd. The Rev. Walter Hodge was the preacher in charge, and the Rev. J. O. Straley, was the Presiding Elder, when the church was dedicated.

### **Walkers Creek Church**

Walkers Creek Church was built in 1921. The Rev. J. W. Morris was the Preacher in Charge at this time. The congregation came from the class rolls of the old Oak Dale School, which building was used for both church services and school. The deed to this property was made July 26th, 1921, from L. M. Newberry, Jr., and Kemp Newberry, his wife, to L. D. Burton, L. M. Newberry, Jr., H. H. Pauley, W. R. Penley and J. A. Kitts, Trustees.

### **Liberty**

Liberty Church became a part of the Bland Charge of the Wytheville District after unification in 1939.

The deed to this church property was made December 13th, 1881, from James Crabtree and wife, Agnes, and Isaac G. Pauley and wife, Malinday, to A. W. Shewey, Walter Shewey, Stephen Lambert, James Lambert and Abraham Fry, Trustees of Liberty Methodist Church of Bland Circuit, Roanoke District, Virginia Conference of the Methodist Church, "in their desire to promote public morality and religion." The deed calls for one-half acre of land.

The above named churches comprise the Bland Charge of the Wytheville District, Holston Conference of the Methodist Church. The Rev. William S. Murphy is the Pastor in Charge and Dr. Joseph A. Hardin is District Superintendent in this centennial year.

The following is a partial list of pastors who have served the Bland Charge through the years.

W. D. Mitchell	1878-1885	S. C. Weatherly	1925-
J. E. Naff	1882-1885	March	1927
J. W. Bowman	1885-1887	J. C. Spurlin	March
P. P. Kinzer	1887-1890	to Oct. 1927	
C. W. Kelley	1890-1891	C. W. Taylor	1927-1931
J. A. H. Shuler	1891-1893	S. E. Bratton	1931-1937
H. C. Clemons	1893-1895	J. A. Hardin	1937-1940
D. H. Carr	1895-1898	Paul Bankston	1940
W. C. Crockett	1898-1902	to March 1941	
C. L. Stradley	1902-1904	Ernest Dugan, Jr.,	1941-
J. A. Duvall	1904-1906	1945	
G. B. Draper	1906-1908	E. W. Pelleaux	1945-1948
W. D. Sharp	1908-1910	O. C. Wright	1948-1950
J. W. Christian	1910-1911	P. C. Foote	1950-1952
Walter Hodge	1911-1915	M. G. Goodpasture, Jr.	1952-1956
W. C. Crockett	1915-1919	Randolph Armbrister	1956
J. W. Morris	1919-1923	Jan. 1957	
J. L. Scott	1923-1925	William S. Murphy	1957

A list of Methodist Preachers, Natives of Bland County, taken from an old Bible which came from Newberry's Chapel Church.

Traveling Connection	Elgin Neel
William Bruce	W. H. Walker
James Edward Bruce	R. M. Walker
Zachariah Mitchell	John Bogle
T. K. Munsey	E. H. Bogle
William E. Munsey	James M. Gross
Ephriam Dunbar	William Thomas
E. K. Hutsel	William W. Hicks
C. K. Miller	Rufas Wheeler
Morris C. Miller	James Repass
John Smith	W. E. Maxwell
Jacob Smith	G. I. Lambert
T. P. Darr	J. G. Halvey
Newton Bell	Watson Helvey
T. K. Harmon	I. N. Munsey
R. L. Newberry	K. G. Munsey
G. W. K. Green	J. V. Hall
Francis M. Fanning	R. N. Havens

Brown Moore  
 William W. Newberry  
 John Ashworth  
 W. R. Miller  
 W. H. Foglesong  
 George D. French  
 P. P. Tabor  
 George W. Penley  
 Robert L. Tickle  
 Gerald Mustard  
 Mrs. E. S. Mustard  
 Walter S. Mustard

#### Local

David Muncy, Sr.  
 David Muncy, Jr.  
 Joshua Bruce Johill  
 Johill Bruce  
 John Cecil  
 Zachariah Muncy

William Cornett  
 James Hill  
 John Miller  
 Peter R. Suiter  
 John H. Bird  
 John S. Hoge  
 I. S. Harmon  
 William R. Harmon  
 Samuel Newberry, Sr.  
 John Williams  
 Hiram Davis  
 Frederick F. Repass  
 Marion Radford  
 Harvey Hanshew  
 J. M. Shepherd  
 Armsted Ashworth  
 Joseph Ashworth  
 Robert Ashworth  
 Charles Ashworth  
 E. Lee Ashworth

The last four mentioned in the list of Traveling Preachers are serving churches in the Holston Conference at the present time.



**District Conference of 1904**  
**Bland Methodist Church**



## BACKGROUND OF THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCHES OF CERES

It is, perhaps, common knowledge that America has always been a nation "on the move". In the early history of our country, the people of America moved in quest of new lands. They were a consecrated people — consecrated to their work, their families, the communities they established, their church and their God. In almost every instance we see the people of our land taking their church and their religion with them as they moved to "new frontiers."

The migration to Southwest Virginia began before the Revolutionary War when Scotch-Irish and German settlers moved down through the Shenandoah Valley in search of new farming settlements. Such Wythe County names which were prominent in 1776 — Kimberlin, Huddle, Philippi, Kegley, Repass, and Cassell — still have a familiar ring in our ears. Two names in particular will be of interest to residents of Ceres.

A man by the name of Michael Cassell fought for Washington's army in Pennsylvania and, after the war, became dissatisfied and decided to visit an uncle who had ventured to Southwest Virginia. Not knowing where his uncle lived, he set out on horseback and finally found his uncle in what is now Wythe County. After arriving in Wythe, he found conditions favorable in the new land, married a Miss Foglesong (Voglesong), and became the fathers of a long line of descendants, many of whom came to the Ceres Community, one of whom served as Lutheran pastor there from 1896 to 1898.

Another name of interest is that of Stephen Repass, who came from Germany or Switzerland about 1750, lingered in Pennsylvania until the close of the Revolutionary War and then migrated to Southwest Virginia and settled near Wythe Courthouse. Here he reared a large family, the members of which were mainly of Lutheran background, although the father was a preacher in the Reformed Church in Germany. Stephen Repass had four sons, Samuel, Frederick, Stephen, Jr., and John. Samuel moved to Bland County and united with another church, probably Methodist, and was the forefather of many of the present Repasses of our community.

The first settlers of Ceres were largely of German background, coming either up Walkers Creek from New River, or across Walkers Mountain from Wythe County. This was as early as, or before, the Revolutionary War. They, too, carried their church and their religion with them. From these first settlers grew the churches of Ceres which, in the order of their founding, were:

**Lutherans:**

As mentioned previously, many of the first settlers of Ceres were of German background and consequently of Lutheran background, who came over Walkers Mountain in large numbers after the Revolutionary War. From these German settlers grew the Lutheran congregations of the county. Sharon Church, Ceres, the oldest Lutheran Church in Bland County, was located on the headwaters of the North Fork of Holston River, and was a charter member of the old Southwest Virginia Synod. However, before a church was started in the community, some families, particularly the Sluss family, are reported to have walked to St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Wythe County, a distance of fully fifteen miles, to attend church.



**Sharon Lutheran Church**

Although baptismal records go back to the turn of the century (1805), the first record of an established church goes back to October 14, 1817, when Jacob Grose-

close deeded to Jacob Spangler and Jacob Kimberlin, elders of the German Congregation, as it was then called, forty acres of land. This was the beginning of the first church of the community, one which was constructed of logs on the hill about 100 yards from where the present Lutheran Church stands. The log church served the people of the community for about 40 years. In 1856, a brick church was built, which was replaced by a frame building in 1883. In 1921, the frame building was completely remodeled and renovated, and still stands on the hill by the cemetery as Sharon Lutheran Church.

At first the church was served by itinerate preachers, but later by regular pastors. The Rev. D. B. Groseclose, the Rev. A. L. Groseclose, and Dr. Nellie Cassell, medical missionary to India, were all confirmed members of Sharon Lutheran Church.

### **Presbyterians:**

The story of the founding of the Presbyterian Church in Ceres is closely tied in with the history of the Lutherans, as for years they worshiped as a union congregation. The founding date of the Presbyterian faith in Ceres goes back to 1827, but the Presbyterians worshipped jointly with the Lutherans in the old log church as early as 1821 or before.

Following the log church was a brick church on or near the same spot. Presbyterian records state: "The new brick church at Sharon was dedicated to the service of the Almighty God on the first sabbath of June, 1856, by the Rev. Stephen Rhudy on the part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and by the Rev. D. F. Palmer on the part of the Presbyterian Church."

This brick church served the community as a union church for about twenty-seven years. In the latter part of this period, a large crack formed in the wall, and when the members became afraid to worship there, they tore it down and built the frame church now used by the Lutherans. The frame church was dedicated to the worship of God on the 24th day of September, 1883.

### **Methodist:**

The Methodists were also a part of the "Ceres Union" Church on the hill where the community graveyard now

stands, but it is difficult to ascertain exactly when the Methodists became a part of this union. However, it is an established fact that the Methodists did hold regular services there.

In 1907, the Methodists withdrew from the Union Church and founded what is now North Holston Methodist Church. The reported reason for the separation is given as follows: The Methodists were having a protracted revival meeting and wanted to extend the meeting into the Sunday that the Lutherans were scheduled to have services. The Reverend P. H. E. Derrick was then pastor of the Lutherans and refused to relinquish his regular Sunday for the Methodists to extend their meeting. At this point, it is reported, the Methodists withdrew to start their own congregation. Part of the Presbyterians went with the Methodists and stayed for about a year, at which time they returned to the union church.



**North Holston Methodist Church**

North Holston Methodist Church was erected, the same one now in use just east of Ceres, and was dedicated in 1908 with Rev. W. M. Morrell preaching the dedicatory sermon. Rev. George T. Jordan was the first pastor. Other



ministers who served the Ceres Circuit since North Holston Church was built were:

Rev. F. M. Burhman	Rev. I. N. Munsey
Rev. S. K. Bird	Rev. W. P. Gibbs
Rev. V. M. Ross	Rev. J. L. Cupp
Rev. H. S. Johnson	Rev. John W. Atkinson
Rev. John W. Stuart	Rev. Fred Rich
Rev. M. E. Deacons	Rev. Thurman Littreal
Rev. J. R. Walker	Rev. G. E. Pagans
Rev. A. V. Rhudy	Rev. J. L. Allen
Rev. G. I. Francisco	Rev. L. T. Clemons.

On January 18, 1907, a deed was made from A. N. Bogle and wife to W. B. Allen, B. P. McFarlane, E. H. Kimberling, A. N. Bogle and C. H. Hubble, Trustees, to this church property. Mr. A. A. Overbay was contractor and builder of the church, was converted in the first revival held, and became the first Sunday School Superintendent. Others who have served in that capacity are: B. M. Crabtree, Neal Wilson, M. C. Tibbs, Tom Cassell, Sidney Epperson and Dick Compton. B. M. Crabtree is the present superintendent, having served at several different times, with a total of about 35 years. Also, on the 13th day of June, 1910, land was deed from A. N. Bogle and wife to A. B. Woolwine, A. C. Stowers, S. S. Hanshaw, J. M. Hughes, G. C. Umbarger, Robert Cassell and S. S. Davis, Trustees, for the erecting of a Methodist parsonage. This parsonage was used until 1957 when the building was sold and a new modern brick building was constructed on a part of the original lot. From old records found in Bethany Church, we find reference to "NauVoo Academy." This building was evidently used for both church and school, as this record refers to John D. F. Jennings as being the preacher in charge in 1852-53. There were ninety-three names on the membership list. Included in the list of members were the names of Groseclose, Umbarger, Crabtree, Repass, Cooley, Cameron, Tibbs, Gillespie, Kinder, Wilson, Etter, Johnson and many others. Seventeen of the original members were Negroes. J. L. Kennedy was the Presiding Elder, and J. L. French was the preacher in charge. Dr. Kennedy later went to the mission field where he served faithfully for fifty years.

The site of "NauVoo Academy" was in an old field which is now owned by Jesse Umbarger, and is known locally as the NauVoo Field.

From the same records at Bethany Church, we find that Doak's Chapel was erected about 1869, with the membership of the old NauVoo Academy being transferred to their class rolls. Doak's Chapel was also used for school purposes. Evidently all of the colored people had by this time left the community, as none are listed on the membership rolls.

The first deed to Bethany Methodist Church property was made May 18, 1878, from Robert Doak and wife to I. M. Repass, H. F. Bruce, James W. Doak, Elias Repass, M. L. Baumgardner, S. S. Hanshew and L. M. Repass, Trustees, "to be used for a neighborhood burying ground, and for the purpose of constructing a church." A later deed from Elias Repass and his wife, Adeline, dated June, 1879, granted an additional three and one-eighth acres "to build or erect a house of worship". This deed was made to I. M. Repass, H. F. Bruce, F. F. Repass, M. L. Baumgardner and L. M. Repass, Trustees.

It is presumed that the congregation saw the need for additional land after the first deed was made.

In 1887, Elias Repass and wife deed an additional acre of land to be used as a Methodist parsonage.

Bethany Church was completed and dedicated in 1880, and the congregation was the same that had worshipped in old Doak's Chapel building. The building committee was composed of I. M. Repass, H. F. Bruce, and Elias Repass. The church was constructed by Mr. Felix Buck for \$1,200. The members who wished to work out their subscribed amount were allowed for common labor 50 cents a day, or 75 cents if they brought their own lunch. Skilled labor was allowed 25 cents a day.

The new building was dedicated on November 14, 1880, with Dr. David Sullins preaching the dedicatory sermon. The Rev. J. Tyler Frazier, who was presiding elder of the Jeffersonville District of the Holston Conference, presided at the first quarterly conference, and the Rev. G. A. Maiden was the first preacher in charge. Bethany Methodist Church is still active at the original site and continues to serve the people of that community.



**Bethany Methodist Church, Dedicated in 1880**

Old Bethel was a union church of Lutherans, Presbyterians, and Methodists, and stood about half-way between Bland and Ceres on the north side of the main road. Bethel was built in 1842 and the land was deeded to the three denominations by Daniel Perkey and James Lambert. The building was burned in the summer of 1889, and was not rebuilt; however, some records show that the congregation continued to worship in the old Gravel Hill school-house after the burning of the church. There is no record of the congregation after 1907, but it is believed that the members joined other churches.

Red Oak Union Church was founded in 1868. It is about four and one half miles east of Ceres. The deed for this property was made the 10th day of October, 1868, from Jonas Umbarger and wife to John M. Cassell, Elias Foglesong and Peter Umbarger, Trustees, "for consideration of the said Jonas Umbarger to advance the religion and educational interest of his neighborhood." This tract of land contained two acres and sixteen poles, and was deeded to the Methodist Episcopal Church South, also to the Lutherans and Presbyterians and for school purposes. The first church stood at the location where the cemetery now stands and it, too, was composed of a membership which included Lutherans, Presbyterians, and Methodists. About 15 years ago a new church was started across the road from the old church. It was completed and dedicated at a special service on the second Sunday in October, 1947. This church still serves this community.

## NEBO CHURCH HISTORY — 1860-1960

Mount Nebo Methodist Church was founded in 1860. It stood on land given for that purpose by Thomas F. Walker.

In 1886 or 1896, the first Nebo Church was torn down and a new church was erected beside the old church site on Thomas Walker's land. This church was built under the leadership of John Daugherty, father of Rev. R. H. Daugherty. Assisting him were Elgin Neel and John Slade. The family of Mr. Slade stated that he said they would quit work and sing hymns. This Thomas F. Walker place was later purchased by Richard S. Gregory. Mount Nebo, as many of us can recall, was located on top of the hill in front of the late John B. Gregory's residence. John Daugherty made the seats that are in this church now, and Elgin Neel made the table you can now see in the church.

In 1931 Nebo Church was again torn down. This time it was moved off the hill to a site (the present highway is in front of the church) that was donated by the late Frank Steele. This change was made mainly because horse and buggy days were over and it was very difficult to get a car up the hill to the church — even a Model T Ford. The church this time was built from the lumber that was new in 1886 or 1896. Construction was under supervision of Chester Lambert.

It was dedicated in 1932. The dedicatory sermon was delivered by the presiding elder, S. D. Long.

In 1955 the Highway Department said that Nebo Church stood in the way of highway construction and must be moved. The Highway Department purchased land from the late John Steele's heirs and moved the church upon a partial basement where it now stands. At this time a deed to the land was made and recorded in Bland Court House.

The church record book that we have was transcribed by Rev. S. K. Byrd on June 3, 1887. (The writer is unable to find an older record). The first pastor listed in this book is W. G. K. Green, October, 1885, serving one year. His name is followed by S. K. Byrd, who transcribed the record. The first ten members on this transcribed record of 143 members are:



Thomas F. Walker  
Wm. E. Neel  
Thomas S. Walker  
John W. Compton  
D. A. Walker

Colby Stowers  
I. F. Stowers  
P. R. Stowers  
R. S. Gregory  
T. E. Gregory

W. W. Hicks was the pastor in 1866. It was stated in the Bland Messenger, our county newspaper, that Rev. W. W. Hicks published the first newspaper in Bland County in 1872-76. The name of this paper was "The Religious Herald."

J. Tyler Frazier served in 1870.

Now we are to the year 1885 with G. W. K. Green serving, and S. K. Byrd following in 1886 and serving three years. James C. Postell was sent as pastor in 1889, John A. Smith in 1890, and John Romans in 1891. S. S. Weatherly was sent to serve in 1896, followed by O. E. Painter, who served three years.

J. M. Maiden was pastor in 1900, T. C. Weaver in 1901, and J. F. Hash in 1902 and 1903. Rev. Hash died on August 18, 1903, and J. V. Helvy filled the unexpired term. Then followed H. C. Johnson in 1904, succeeded by S. W. Bourne in 1906, who served for four years. The next pastors to serve were: Rev. C. A. Pangle, 1910; Rev. W. A. Gose, 1911; Rev. J. W. Stewart, 1912.

A. H. Gentry was sent to the Rocky Gap Circuit in 1913. S. D. Lambert came in 1916 and served three years. J. D. Spitzer next served this circuit for four years. He was then followed by H. L. Hanshew in 1922, J. E. Graham in 1925, and M. Quesenberry in 1928. Rev. Quesenberry was serving this church at the time it was rebuilt and dedicated.

In the fall of 1932, Rev. R. W. Watts became the pastor. In 1933 he revised the church membership and reported an enrollment of fifty-four. Rev. A. A. Angle served Rocky Gap Circuit in 1935, and W. H. Simpkins in 1936. In October, 1937, Rev. Lee Hill was sent.

Rev. Edd Smith came next, and he was the last pastor to serve us on the Rocky Gap Circuit.

At Conference in 1940, a new circuit was formed, the East Tazewell Circuit. At this time Rev. L. W. Pierce was

serving Tazewell District as District Superintendent, and Powell Richardson was sent as first pastor of this new charge. He lived in the home Mrs. Alice Neel until he married Miss Dorothy Byrum. Soon the new parsonage was finished and Rev. and Mrs. Richardson were the first occupants. Kenneth King then served the East Tazewell Circuit for four years.

At Conference in 1947, East Tazewell Charge was made a Pilot Charge and Rev. Jay B. Osborne came as pastor and served four years. During this period the Methodist Youth Fellowship was organized and Mrs. Bryan Stowers was chosen as Counselor. The Woman's Society of Christian Service came into being at Nebo Church under Rev. Osborne.

Next to serve us for two years was Rev. R. C. Gillespie, who did outstanding work, particularly with the young people in Nebo Church and the entire circuit.

In 1953 we were without a pastor but the District Superintendent, Rev. Joe Hampton, was able to secure the services of Mr. Walter Alford, of Max Meadows, who served very ably.

Next, Rev. J. C. Clarke was sent to serve the East Tazewell Circuit. He labored faithfully the three years he was with us and many of our members were received into full fellowship under his ministry.

In 1957 we again found ourselves without a pastor. At that time Rev. H. M. Russell divided the circuit and found two students to serve us. Rev. Marrs served four churches and Rev. Peyton Rowlett, Jr., served four — one being Nebo. Rev. Rowlett did outstanding work, especially with the young people in the M.Y.F. In late September he returned to college and Rev. Lane came to finish the year. Rev. Lane passed away very suddenly in 1960.

Rev. Ireson, our present pastor, came to us in 1958. He is doing an outstanding job on a circuit that didn't stay divided as it had been in 1957, but on a circuit too large for any one man.

A centennial homecoming was held July 31, 1960, with Rev. R. H. Daugherty, of Parkersburg, West Virginia, and Rev. L. W. Pierce, of Bristol, Tennessee, as speakers.

## PINE GROVE

The first Pine Grove Church was a log building which was erected in 1866. On April 7, 1866, William Wynn and Mollie, his wife, deeded to William Compton, Thomas H. Kinser, James Justice, Charles P. Wheeler and Sanders Hicks, Trustees, a piece of land, or lot, containing one acre, "in consideration for the love which they have for the love of Christ"; in trust that they should erect and build or cause to be built thereon a house or a place of worship. Mr. Jessie Justice, or "Uncle Jessie," as he was familiarly known, suffered a broken leg while working on this log church. He was always a cripple after that accident.

For some reason there seemed to be some doubt about the validity of the above mentioned deed, so a new deed to the identical property was made February 9, 1894 between J. Newton Johnson and wife and John R. Johnson and wife to H. G. Hicks, H. B. Shufflebarger, T. J. Neel, S. E. Gross and J. M. Kidd, Trustees.

The old log building was used until 1905 when the present church was built and dedicated. All denominations in the community helped with money, labor and lumber. It was dedicated for the use of all Christian denominations, but was deeded to the Methodist Episcopal Church South.

The Pine Grove Church is on the Rocky Gap Charge at this time and the Rev. George Arnold is pastor.

## ROCKY GAP METHODIST

The Methodist Church at Rocky Gap belongs to Rocky Gap Circuit, which consists at present of seven churches: Rocky Gap, Round Bottom, Sunny Point, Pine Grove, New Hope, Green Valley and Bastian. At one time this Circuit had nine appointments but, due to changes made by Conference, they now stand as stated. Nebo, Calvary and Kinser's Chapel were taken from Bland County and put in Tazewell County, and Bishop's Chapel was discontinued because the membership dwindled away. Round Bottom Church began in a log house but in 1897 the present dwelling was erected. Sunny Point Church was built in 1911, but an addition was built in 1958 and 1959 with class

rooms and a furnace. Honaker Chapel, which was built on land donated by J. D. Honaker in 1887, was used by the Methodists at Rocky Gap until the one-room building became inadequate for the needs of the Sunday School. The parsonage for a time was located on Clear Fork behind Bishop's Chapel Church, but in 1924 property was bought at Rocky Gap and occupied until a modern brick building was constructed in 1954. Rev. R. E. Hamblin was the first occupant.

Shortly after he came on the circuit, he began to talk of a new church. Mrs. Cora Conley donated a lot near the parsonage and a brick building was erected, modern in many respects, consisting of a sanctuary, class rooms, kitchen, chimes and furnace. The first service was held in the new church, now called Rocky Gap Methodist Church, in August 1958, with Rev C. W. Taylor preaching the dedicatory sermon.

Many preachers will long be remembered as having served on this circuit. Among them were Painter, Hash, Towe, Spitser, Lambert, Graham, Hanshew, White, Simpkins, Quessenberry, Angle, Allen, Watts, Hill, Smith, Hamblin, Hale and the present pastor, George Arnold.

The new church and parsonage are wonderful improvements and add to our community.

Mr. C. N. Pemberton was chairman of the building committee. Much credit for the new church goes to him and his very active committee.



**Rocky Gap Methodist Church**



**1846 D. B. 12, p. 301**

Mark R. Bogle, Euell S. Murphy and Samuel H. Murphy to Stephen Gose, Henry C. Kidd, Thomas Cook, Elizah Kidd and Isaac Repass, Trustees, conveyed "a certain lot in the valley of Wolf Creek at the ford of the Green Valley branch, containing one acre." For Methodist, Lutheran, and Presbyterian Churches as a place of public worship and for other purposes. The trustees are to so arrange the hours of meetings of the several denominations "that no clashing in the appointments for the ministers shall interrupt the harmony of the neighborhood." This property is situated in Bland County.

**1858 D. B. No. 12, p. 293**

William Redrick and Zillah C., his wife, conveyed to Stephen Gose, Wm. M. Neel, Archibald Barnett, Isaac Repass and James V. Pendleton, Trustees, a lot of land on Wolf Creek containing two acres for the benefit of the Methodist Church South and for the Lutheran Church. This property lies in Bland County.

**1849 Deed Book No. 9, page 490**

James C. Davidson and Julia H. Davidson, his wife, conveyed to Robert W. Davidson, John C. Carpenter, Peter C. Honaker, Alexander Suiter, Edward Wilson, John P. Lambert and James C. Davidson, Trustees, "a certain lot containing two acres lying on Wolf Creek opposite the mouth of Terry's Spring branch on the west bank of Wolf Creek, for the use of the Methodist Episcopal Church, S. This property is in Bland County. (Deeds to the above mentioned churches were recorded in Tazewell County prior to the formation of Bland County.)

**THE HISTORY OF THE MECHANICSBURG  
CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

The first Christian labors near Mechanicsburg, Bland County, Virginia, were done by Dr. Chester Bullard in the Bane neighborhood about the year 1840. In 1845 a few persons were baptized.

William Crawford's wife was the first member of this Church in this county. She had been baptized while a young lady in Craig County, Virginia.

A. B. Walthal occasionally visited the county and preached and baptized several persons.

In the year 1850, Dr. Chester Bullard began regular visits to Bland County. According to old records, there were two William Crawfords who were baptized; several others increased the number of the little band until the Southwestern Co-operation made Mechanicsburg a regular appointment, which was visited regularly by D. A. Snow the year he traveled, and by A. J. Cogill who, as evangelist, organized the church at Mechanicsburg in 1860.

The two William Crawfords were the first regularly appointed elders, although James Curtice acted for some time in that capacity.

From that time the church has been gradually gaining in strength.

The following pastors have served the church from its inception until the present time: Dr. Chester Bullard, A. B. Walthal, D. A. Snow, A. J. Cogill, John P. Roach, J. T. Showalter, Jim Taylor, P. P. Hasselvander, H. D. Coffey, John A. Tate, H. M. Linkous, J. W. West, G. C. Looney, S. M. Bailey, W. Powell Davis, P. P. Patton, and A. W. Huffman.

The church celebrated its 100th anniversary July 31, 1960.

On October 9, 1960, the church building was completely destroyed by fire. The church, the community, and the county all suffered from this tragic loss. Plans are under way to construct a new building.

The church is now meeting for worship services in the Mechanicsburg school building, and is grateful to the School Board for extending this privilege.

### **HORNBARGER'S CHAPEL**

Hornbarger's Chapel, a Christian Church, was the first church built in Bastian. This church was a log structure and the deed to the land, one-half acre, dated May 14, 1875, being the same land on which a church is now

erected known as Hornbarger's Chapel, was deeded by William P. Hornbarger and wife to the trustees, Paul James, James M. Starks, and Thomas Coburn. The land was to be held by them for the use of said Christian Church, but all other orthodox denominations of the church were to have the privilege of holding meetings in the church when the holding of the same did not interfere with the meetings of said Christian Church.

There was a small bench in the back of the log church where the colored blacksmith, Griffin Page, and his wife sat.

Early pastors were James Calfee and James Wingo.

In 1896, William P. Hornbarger and wife deeded one acre and twenty-six poles to the following trustees: H. G. Hicks, C. H. Britts, F. I. Suiter, J. M. Kidd, E. M. Fortner, G. W. Starks and T. W. Muncy, upon which said lot or parcel of land there was to be a Union Church erected and the same to be held by the said trustees aforesaid and their successors in office for that purpose. The doors of said church were to be open to all orthodox denominations alike.

In 1959 an addition was added to this church. At present the Methodist, Christian and Baptist congregations use this church for worship.



**Bastian Union Church**

## CHURCH OF GOD

The Church of God, Bastian, Virginia, was founded here on October 4, 1935 by the Rev. J. O. Eure.

The first church was erected in the spring of 1938 by the Rev. G. L. Berry.

The present church structure was erected in the spring of 1947 by the Rev. T. O. Dennis.

The present pastor is Rev. Marvin E. Porter.

## ST. MATHEWS LUTHERAN CHURCH

The congregation of St. Mathews Lutheran Church at Bland was organized in 1873 in an old storehouse by the Rev. Stephen Rhudy with the following members: Captain James Stowers, Mrs. Sarah Dunn, W. M. Hedrick, Mrs. Victoria Wilkerson, Mrs. Sarah J. Muncy, Mrs. Mary J. Shannon, Mrs. Arbanna Robinett, Mrs. Cynthia Grayson, Mrs. Elizabeth Ritter and George Ritter.

The little congregation held services a few times in an old storehouse; then in the former Masonic Hall; then in the Courthouse, and later for a few years in the Bland Methodist Church.

At a meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Crab Orchard, held at Randolph Grayson's home on the 10th day of September, 1879, for the purpose of electing trustees for the Seddon Lutheran Church, A. J. Muncy was appointed as secretary. The members present then proceeded to elect trustees.

The names of James W. Stowers, W. M. Hedrick and A. J. Muncy were put before the church for election. They were unanimously elected by the members present. At this meeting it was proposed by J. B. Greever that a building committee be appointed for the Evangelical Lutheran Church at Seddon. Afterward the meeting adjourned. (The minutes of this meeting carried the signature of A. J. Muncy, Secretary).

Land for the Lutheran Church was given by Charles S. Grayson and properly deeded in November, 1879, to Captain James W. Stowers, W. M. Hedrick and A. J. Muncy,



Trustees, "for and in consideration of the high regard and esteem, the said party of the first part has for the Lutheran Church".

The Sunday School for St. Mathews Lutheran Church at Seddon (now Bland), was organized April 7, 1889. The first superintendent was A. J. Muncy.

Lutheran pastors who have served Bland County: Rev. George D. Flora, Rev. Nehemiah Bonham, Rev. Jacob Scherer, Rev. J. A. Brown, Rev. J. J. Greever — served Sharon Church, Ceres; Rev. Stephen Rhudy, Rev. H. E. Bailey, Rev. J. A. Mahood, Rev. D. B. Groseclose, Rev. J. W. Strickler, Rev. C. W. Cassell, Rev. R. E. Somers, Rev. P. H. E. Derrick, Jr., Rev. M. O. Huddle, Rev. J. L. Deal, Rev. Raymond Booze, Rev. Jacob Young, Rev. Johan Suurkivi, Rev. Karl Laante, Rev. Roger S. Kluttz — served Sharon Lutheran Churches, Ceres, and St. Mathews Lutheran Church, Bland.

Rev. Stephen Rhudy founded St. Mathews Church in Bland. Rev. D. B. Groseclose is a native son of Sharon Church, Ceres.



**St. Mathews Lutheran Church, Bland**

## SHARON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



Sharon, the oldest Presbyterian Church in Bland County, is located at Ceres, Virginia. In October, 1817, the land for the first church was deeded by Jacob Grose close to Jacob Spangler of the Presbyterian Church and Jacob Kimberlin of the Lutheran Church.

Four church buildings make up the history of this church. The earliest of these was an old log building which was built prior to 1821 and was used jointly by the Lutherans and Presbyterians as a union church. This church stood near the site of the present Lutheran Church, probably on a plot which is now occupied by the cemetery.

The following is an excerpt from the Session Record Book of Sharon Presbyterian Church: Datelined, "Head of the Rich Valley, October 4, 1827." "We, in this part of our moral wilderness, have been for many years destitute of the means of grace as they are administered by Presbyterian clergymen, whose faith and practice we believe to be in accordance with the Holy Scriptures . . . ." Plans were made for the organization of a Presbyterian Church. "In the year 1827, the Rev. Dugold McIntyre came to visit us in the month of August and preached unto us four times during his stay, at which time a sacrament

was appointed by him to be held September 23. He, not being able to attend, sent the Rev. George Crawford to administer the sacrament in the solemn occasion. Mr. Crawford came according to promise and proceeded to ordain the following persons as elders: Mr. George Hudson, Mr. John Shannon and Mr. Daniel McAuley. Likewise, Mr. Crawford organized a church among us to be called Sharon, which was taken under the care of Abingdon Presbytery at their session at Austinville Virginia, in October, 1827." Signed by George Hudson, Clerk of the Session. Besides the three previously mentioned elders, the following made up the charter members: Col. Harmon, Miss Margart Wilson, Martha Staboth, Alexander Foster, Mr. Stephen Mahood, Mrs. Elizabeth Doak, Mrs. Elizabeth Wilson, Mr. John Wilson and James Wilson.

The log building was used until a new brick church was built on, or near, the same spot. The record states, "The new brick church at Sharon was dedicated to the service of Almighty God on the first Sabbath of June, 1856, by the Rev. Stephen Rhudy on the part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and by the Rev. D. F. Palmer on the part of the New School Presbyterian Church."

"The new brick church Sharon" served the community as a union church for about 27 years. In the latter part of this period a large crack formed in the wall, and when the members became afraid to worship there, they tore it down and built the frame building which is still standing and used by the Lutherans. The new Sharon Church was received and dedicated to the worship of God on the 24th day of September, 1883. The dedication sermon was preached by Dr. S. A. Repass, assisted by the Rev. James A. Mahood, Lutheran; the Rev. J. J. Scherer, Lutheran; the Rev. E. Studebaker, Presbyterian; the Rev. James Calvin Smith, Presbyterian; and the Rev. James A. Brown, Presbyterian. This church served both the Presbyterians and Lutherans and was also used by the Methodists until they built their own church, North Holston, about 1907.

In 1911, the Presbyterians sold their half-interest to the Lutherans for \$309.00 and built their own church (pictured on opposite page) on land given by H. E. Peery, an elder, who planned and supervised the construction work. This new church, still in use, was dedicated in October,

1911, by the Rev. R. Dabney Carson and the Rev. A. B. Hudson. Both the Lutheran and Presbyterian Churches of Ceres are still officially designated by the name "Sharon".

During the 134 year history, Presbytery has met at the church on five different occasions. The church has had 25 pastors or pastoral supplies; 27 elders and 13 deacons. Several outstanding full-time Christian workers have gone out from the three churches: Dr. Harve Fogle-song from the Methodist; Dr. Albert Groseclose and Dr. Nellie Cassell from the Lutheran; and Dr. William E. Hudson, Presbyterian. Dr. Hudson served several years as the superintendent of Mountain Mission Work in connection with the General Assembly's Home Mission Committee. He was an advocate of, and instrumental in, the organization of the Synod of Appalachia, of which the church is still a part. Further, he was the founder of the Massanetta Springs Summer Conference and served for more than 25 years as manager of Massanetta Springs and as the director of the Bible Conference.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, at its 92nd annual meeting in 1952 at Charleston, West Virginia, awarded Sharon Presbyterian Church a certificate commemorating the 125th anniversary of its organization.

Four men have served the church in the capacity of the Clerk of the Session: George Hudson, Isaac Hudson, John Hudson and W. T. Allen. Mr. J. M. Thomas currently serves as clerk.

A recent renovation program just completed includes the re-plastering and re-finishing of the interior of the church and the installation of an electric heating system.

Pastors and stated supplies of the Sharon Church — Rev. Samuel H. McNutt, 1821; Mr. William Quillin (s), 1821; Rev. George Crawford, 1821; Rev. Dugold McIntyre, 1821. (From May, 1859, to May, 1861 the congregation was supplied with preaching once a month by Presbytery of New River, the members of said Presbytery preaching alternately.) Rev. J. Calvin Smith, 1872-1885; Rev. T. J. Mowbray, 1886-1890; Rev. Alexander (s.s.), 1890-1891; Rev. M. W. Doggett (s.s.), 1891 (Tazewell); Rev. H. C. Brown (s.s.), 1891-1892; Rev. McFaden, 1893-1895; Rev. J. F. Matheson, Sept. 15, 1895-1898; Rev. R. B. Hudson, 1898-1906; Rev. J. G. Reveley, 1907-1911; Rev. J. M. Mc-



Chesney (s.s.), about 1912; Rev. J. E. Guthrie, Oct. 1913-1915; Rev. Allen Jones, 1916-1920; Rev. James Herron (s.s.), 1921; Rev. Somers McGavock, 1924-1925; Rev. Sexton Buchanan (s.s.), 1926; Rev. O. C. Brown, 1927-1936; Rev. M. D. Newton, 1937-1943; Rev. Harvey M. Orr, 1945-1947; Rev. W. F. Wadsworth, 1951-1957; Rev. M. D. Murphy, 1958.

### KIMBERLIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The date of the organization of this church does not seem to be available. The earliest record of the Kimberlin Church occurs in a listing of the churches of Montgomery Presbytery when it was formed from Lexington Presbytery on November 10, 1843. There is, however, so far as can be determined, no record of this church in the history of Lexington Presbytery.

From the minutes of the Session, we find the following early record. "On the second Sabbath of November, 1853, the members of the Church of Kimberlin convened for the purpose of electing two ruling elders in addition to the one present acting; whereupon Captain William Howe and Captain William Bane were nominated and separately elected." Tobias Miller had previously been elected a ruling elder. The Rev. B. F. Sacy was the moderator at this meeting. The April 23, 1852 minutes of Montgomery Presbytery lists, "Rev. Charles Miller — 1 Sab. at Mechanicsburg and 1 at Blacksburg." The minutes of the General Assembly for the year 1853 lists the Kimberlin Presbyterian Church, Mechanicsburg, Virginia, as having 25 communicants and Charles A. Miller serving as Licentiate (licensed to preach, but not yet ordained). The following year, 1854, the church is listed as being served by the Christiansburg, Virginia, post office and Mr. Miller was serving as Stated Supply, but the next year his title was "Domestic Missionary". The church is shown as having 13 communicants in 1854.

Records in the Giles County Court House show that a deed was made to Tobias Miller on April 22, 1853, for "about an acre of land on which a new Presbyterian Church now stands", described as being at the forks of Walkers Creek and Tazewell Road, on the waters of Kimberlin Creek. This location was near the present home of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Stafford. The site was chosen for the church because it was half-way between the Shannon's of

Poplar Hill and Hoge's of Point Pleasant. Clay was bought and bricks were made by members of the congregation. It was at times referred to as "Brick Church". It is interesting to note the postal addresses of this church as given in the minutes of the General Assembly. In 1853 it was Mechanicsburg; 1854-58, Christiansburg; 1859-61, Central Depot, Va.; 1863, Blacksburg, Va.; 1866, Marion, Va.; 1868-73, White Gate, Va.; 1874, Mechanicsburg, Va.

Records in the Bland County Court House show that in 1872 Madison Allen made a deed to James B. Miller, Miller B. Allen and Samuel Mustard, Trustees, to the same piece of land which had previously been deeded to Tobias Miller. Shortly after this transaction the church was badly damaged by high water and was abandoned. Minutes of the above mentioned session show that on the 2nd day of November, 1873, the meeting of the session was held at the Baptist Church on Walkers Creek.

In 1874 a petition was presented to Abingdon Presbytery, "to extend the bounds of what is now the Kimberlin Church so as to include all of the territory in and around Seddon, under the name of the Bland Presbyterian Church." The church was discontinued and demolished about the year 1874, when the congregation of seven communicants was instrumental in the establishment of the Bland Presbyterian Church.

Pastors serving this church have been: 1853-61, Rev. Charles A. Miller; 1863, Rev. William F. Wilhelm; 1866, Rev. D. T. Palmer; 1868-72, Rev. James M. Humphrey.



Church at Kimberlin Creek in Giles County,  
Virginia — 1859 (Courtesy Virginia Historical Society)

## BLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The minutes of the Presbytery of Abingdon, Synod of Virginia, meeting at Green Spring on April 25, 1874, show the following: "A committee consisting of Rev. I. N. Naff and J. D. Thomas with Ruling Elders A. G. UpDyke and Isaac Hudson was appointed to organize a church at Bland Court House if the way be clear." Apparently the way was not immediately clear for the minutes of Presbytery meeting at Sharon Church on September 3, 1874 read, "The committee to organize a church at Bland Court House reported that they had not yet organized the church. The committee was, on motion, continued with discretionary power to organize a church (if the way be clear) in the eastern part of Bland County to be composed of members about the Court House from Kimberlin Church."

The minutes of the meeting of Abingdon Presbytery, held in Wytheville on April 22, 1875, show that the church was organized at Point Pleasant. "The committee to organize a church in Bland County made the following report: Your commission appointed at last regular meeting of Presbytery to organize a church in Bland County reports that said church was organized as ordered on 21st day of November, 1874, with Dr. W. E. Hoge, A. G. UpDyke and S. S. Reider as Ruling Elders and composed of 16 members. We request the enrollment of said church as Bland Church, and that the name of Kimberlin Church be dropped from the roll, as all the members remaining upon the roll of that church are now members of Bland church. We recommend that the assessment be \$2.00." Signed: Isaac N. Naff and James D. Thomas. This report was received, approved and the commission discharged. Dr. W. E. Hoge then took his seat as Ruling Elder of Bland Church.

The session records for the Kimberlin Church show that the first meeting of the session for the Bland Church was held November 15th, 1874. A. G. UpDyke, Dr. William E. Hoge, and Capt. S. S. Reider were elders. John M. Hicks was elected deacon.

It is assumed that Dr. William E. Hoge gave the land for this church; however, no deed was recorded for the property until the 15th of February, 1892, when Jane M.

Hoge and William H. Hoge made a deed to Ballard Brown, Abram F. Harmon and William H. Hoge to "a tract of land, containing one acre on Helvey's Mill Creek, on which the Point Pleasant Presbyterian Church now stands."

The Rev. J. Calvin Smith served as the first pastor of the Bland Church. The record of the meeting of Presbytery on April 28, 1871 in Hillsville reads, "Presbytery reconsidered its action and resolved that when it adjourn (sic), it adjourn to meet at Bland Court House on Thursday, 27th day of July, 1871, at eleven o'clock. All with the view to the examination and ordination, if the way be clear, of Licentiate J. C. Smith to the full work of the gospel ministry as an evangelist." A later minute states that this meeting was held in Bland Court House July 30th, 1871. Mr. Smith continued to serve as pastor until 1884. Rev. Thomas Mowbray succeeded him in 1887 and held the pastorate for the following year when he was succeeded by the Rev. R. B. Hudson, who also served for two years. From this point on the men who served the Leyburn Church as pastor also served the Bland Church and the complete record is given in the history of the Leyburn Church.

It was about the year 1909, during the pastorate of J. G. Reveley, that various misunderstandings and trying circumstances took place in the Bland Church at Point Pleasant, which led to its being moved to Crandon, four miles to the east. A new church was constructed and dedicated in July, 1909. At this time, 20 communicants were on the roll of the church.

The building which was constructed in 1909 still serves the congregation of the church.

## LEYBURN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Leyburn congregation is the largest, yet the youngest, in the county.

A report of the Mission Committee of the Presbytery given during the session of October 8, 1870, in the Bethel Presbyterian Church, entitled "Bland County Mission Field" is interesting and informative:

"(1) Bland Court House. Here there is no house of worship of any kind. Our brethren preached in the Court House. There is no organized church. We know five members of our church in immediate neighborhood. There



may be others. Four of these are Franklin Grayson (an elder), wife and two daughters, one of whom is married. (2) Kimberlin, 12 miles east of the Court House. There is a church edifice here, open to us and out of repair (in good condition). (3) Sharon, 15 miles west of the Court House. There is a church edifice here, open to us, and out of repair."

"These three points will raise \$400 for regular services. The field is a valley running east and west and 27 miles long. Brother Lacy says 'There seems to be an earnest desire to have regular preaching (Presbyterian) and I was extremely gratified with my visit. A Dr. Hoge promises to furnish a house and yard and spring and fire wood additional'."

A committee consisting of Rev. I. N. Naff and Rev. J. D. Thomas and Ruling Elders A. G. UpDyke and Isaac Hudson was appointed by Presbytery to organize a church at Bland Court House in 1874. However, the committee was successful in organizing a church about five miles to the east of the county seat at Point Pleasant.

Fifteen years later the pastor of the Bland Church, Rev. Thomas Mowbray, was made chairman of a second committee of Abingdon Presbytery to organize a church at Bland Court House. His report is given in Presbytery's minutes as follows: "Bland Court House — On the day specified (October 28, 1889) the members of the committee having been duly notified of the same, the congregation assembled and there being but two members of the committee present, to-wit, Rev. Thomas Mowbray and Ruling Elder Abram Harmon, they, the said Mowbray and Harmon, members of the committee appointed by Presbytery, did proceed to organize a church consisting of the following members. Viz: Samuel Hall, Mrs. M. Williams, James Tinsley, Mrs. Tinsley, Mary Susan Hall, W. F. McColgan, Mary G. McColgan, A. R. Heflin, Mrs. A. R. Heflin and Paris Waddell.

"Elders and deacons were ordained and installed and all the proceedings were done according to the requirement of the Book of Church Order.

"The church was named 'The Leyburn Church'." Signed: Thomas Mowbray, Chairman.

Presbytery's Manual in the year 1889 shows the following officers: E. D. Mustard, Clerk of Session, Cismont,

Va.; R. J. Mustard, Treasurer, Bland, Va.

The Manual in 1892 lists the following elders and deacons: Judge Martin Williams, Ruling Elder, Bland Court House, Va.; J. W. Tinsley, Deacon, Bland Court House, Va.; and W. W. Grayson, Bland Court House, Va.

Another record in the "Ryburn Collection" at the Historical Foundation in Montreat, N. C., states that the church was named for Dr. Leyburn, a noted and distinguished Presbyterian preacher of the South. This "Dr. Leyburn" probably, although not necessarily, was Dr. George William Leyburn, born in Lexington, Virginia, January 2, 1809; a graduate of Princeton College and Princeton Seminary. He served as a missionary in Greece, as a teacher in Bedford, and as a stated supply for the Leesville and Castle Craig Churches in Montgomery Presbytery, and in 1858 as editor of the "Presbyterian Witness" in Knoxville, Tennessee. From 1861-65 he was an agent for the American Tract Society and stated supply for the Appomattox Church at Appomattox Court House in 1866-75. He went to Salonica, Turkey in 1875 as a missionary and died there on August 14 of that year.

Further information of interest in the "Ryburn Collection" papers is that prior to 1888 the Rev. J. Calvin Smith lived and preached in Bland for many years. The Presbyterian families in the county were: Dr. William E. Hoge, James Burton, A. G. UpDyke, Blair Brown, Ballard Brown, George Miller, Frank Grayson, Isaac Hudson, Madison Allen, Capt. H. C. Groseclose, Del. Groseclose and others.

Besides Judge Martin Williams, several others have served as the Clerk of Session, namely, E. D. Mustard, William F. McColgan, Robert J. Mustard, E. E. Shannon and T. E. Mallory.

The following have served the church as pastor or stated supply: Thomas Mowbray, S. S., 1887-1889; H. C. Brown, S. S., 1892; J. F. Matheson, S. S., 1896-97; R. B. Hudson, P., 1899-1901, 1903-1906; J. G. Reveley, P., 1908-1911; J. E. Guthrie, P., 1913-1915; Allen Jones, S. S., 1917-1919; James Herron, S. S., 1922; E. S. McGavock, S. S., 1924-25; Otis C. Brown, P., 1926-1936; M. D. Newton, P., 1937-43; H. H. Orr, P., 1945-47; W. F. Wadsworth, P., 1951-57; C. D. Murphy, P., 1958.

The Leyburn congregation has worshipped with the congregation of St. Mathews Lutheran Church since the congregation was organized in 1889.

### **THE BLUE GRASS TRAIL LARGER PARISH**

In November, 1955, the congregation of the Bland, Leyburn, and Sharon Churches and the neighboring congregation of the Walkers Creek Presbyterian Church, White Gate, Virginia, voted unanimously to organize into a cooperative venture known as the Larger Parish. Since all of the churches were located on or near state highway 42, the Blue Grass Trail, the name was borrowed and the parish became known as The Blue Grass Trail Larger Parish. Each church elected five representatives to the Parish Council and the council elected T. E. Mallory, Chairman; R. S. Bane, Secretary, and Dewey Parcell, Treasurer.

Just prior to the organization of the parish, a new manse (see picture) was constructed by the three Bland County congregations. It is located on land purchased from P. C. Curry, on U. S. Highway 21 and 52, north of the town of Bland. The new manse was occupied by the pastor in August, 1954.

The Larger Parish plan encouraged joint cooperation in the total church program. A parish-wide Men of the Church organization was formed and continues to function actively. A youth choir was organized under the direction of Mrs. W. F. Wadsworth and presented several musical programs in the parish churches. Many programs and activities, including an annual picnic, continue to be held cooperatively.



**Presbyterian Manse, Blue Grass Trail Larger Parish**

## NEGRO CHURCHES

There are at present only two churches serving the Negro citizens of Bland County. Both churches are in the Dry Fork community. The first preaching services for this community were held in the old log schoolhouse. Later Baptist and Methodist churches were built.

Deed to the Methodist Church was recorded the 31st day of January, 1901, and was from A. J. and Emma Tynes to M. H. Ferguson, J. R. See, A. J. Tynes, R. E. Ferguson and M. D. Ferguson, Trustees of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. A new church on this site was built and dedicated in 1941. James Brown organized the first Sunday School, became the first Sunday School Superintendent and taught the first Sunday School class. In the earlier days of the county, there were log churches in what is now Mechanicsburg District — one on the "Skillet", the other not far from the present site of Bland Correctional Farm. These churches were later abandoned as the Negroes they served left the community.

At one time there was a church for the Negro citizens just north of the town of Bland. Unfortunately, a deed to the property on which the church was built was never made and therefore the church was lost to this community.



Colored Baptist Church





**Colored Methodist Church**

The colored church located on Madison Allen's farm about one-half mile from the Kimberlin Presbyterian Church in Bland County was built of logs. The church building was about 20 ft. x 20 ft., and was erected by Madison Allen about 1841 for a place of worship and recreation for his slaves and those of his neighbors.

Prayer meetings and song services were held here for a quarter of a century under the leadership of Uncle George and Aunt Lettie Calender and old Tom Hobbs, old time Negro evangelist preachers.

Such services and neighborhood gatherings were held here until the colored population became too small to hold regular services.

## MINISTERS

### Johnston's History of the Middle New River Settlements

#### ROBERT SAWYERS SHEFFEY



Among the most remarkable, eccentric, intinerant, local Methodist preachers who ever lived in the New River valley was Robert Sawyers Sheffey, who was born in the county of Wythe, Virginia, July 4, 1820, and died in Giles County, Virginia in 1902. He was a son of Henry Sheffey of Wythe, and came into the New River Valley sometime in 1859. There he married his second wife, a Miss Stafford, in what is commonly known as Irish Settlement in Giles County, where Mr. Sheffey located. For reasons of his own he never united with the Conference but continued throughout his career as an itinerant, going from place to place and wherever his inclination led him. He was eccentric beyond description. That he was a pious, devout Christian and Godly man was never doubted. He was a man of wonderful faith in God, and was usually most eloquent in public prayer. When troubles and difficulties surrounded him, his oft repeated statement was,

"I'll go and talk to the Lord about it." One thing about this good man which was most remarkable was that his prayers for specific things were not only in vain, but what he asked the Lord for, in some way or some how he always seemed to receive. So often were his prayers answered, and his highest hopes and aspirations gratified, that people who knew him well and were disposed to do evil things were frequently alarmed for fear he would call down vengeance from heaven upon their guilty heads; and many believed that if he should ask the Lord to smite them with pestilence or death it would be done. The eccentricities of this man led numbers of people to express doubts as to his sanity. Some of these expressions reached Mr. Sheffey and he often publicly repeated what he had heard, and his only comment thereon was, "Would to the Lord they were crazy on the same subject that I am."

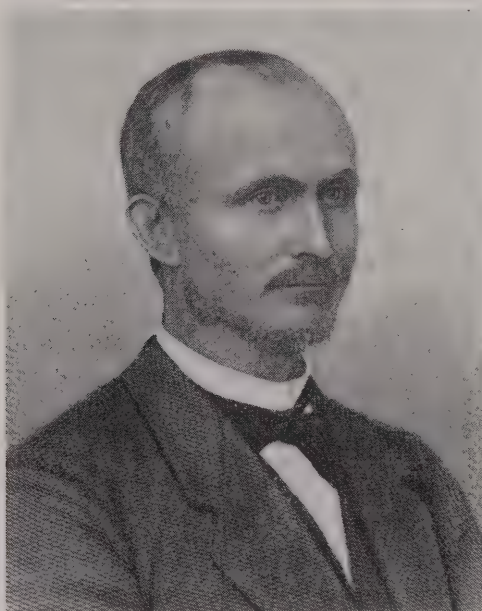
Among the many interesting stories and anecdotes told of this preacher, Mr. Sheffey, is one which has been verified by some of the best people in the neighborhood of its happening. Mr. Sheffey had as a regular preaching place the residence of Mr. Anderson Tiller on East River in Mercer County. It was known that Mr. Sheffey was exceedingly fond of sweet things and especially of honey. On one occasion while on a preaching tour, he went to fill his appointment on East River and became, as usual, the guest of his friend, Tiller. It was on a Sunday morning late in the summer season and, while at the breakfast table, Mr. Tiller remarked to Mr. Sheffey that he had no honey for him — his bees had done no good, had not swarmed, and that he feared they had frozen out in the winter or that some insect had destroyed them, and that the season was too far spent to have any swarms. Mr. Sheffey arose from the table and went down upon his knees and told the Lord that the brother's bees had not swarmed; that there was no honey in the house; and he implored the Lord to have the bees swarm. Scarcely had his petition ceased when the swarms came with such rapidity that Mr. Tiller was unable to secure enough gums to save all the swarms.

Mr. Sheffey was known to have healed a child who was supposedly dying during a service he was holding in Summers County. The child was having paroxysms and

the mother held the child in her arms, crying that it was dying. Mr. Sheffey took the child in his arms, fell upon his knees and asked God for the life of the little child and that it be restored to the mother.

Mr. Sheffey had wonderful faith in God's care for his people in providing for their wants, physical as well as spiritual.

### DR. WILLIAM ELBERT MUNSEY



Dr. William Elbert Munsey was born in Bland County, Virginia, July 13, 1833. He was the son of the Rev. David Munsey and grandson of the Rev. Zacariah Munsey. He was a man of very limited formal education but had a very brilliant mind and much natural ability. When a young man he worked in the fields for Dr. John Hoge. According to Dr. Hoge, he would become so engrossed with reading that his work would be neglected.

William Elbert Munsey joined the church at the age of ten years. At thirteen he received at the Hoge Camp-



grounds, Bland County, an evidence of pardon with which he was not fully satisfied. At a camp meeting on Kimberling, under the preaching of Rev. George R. Stewart, when he was seventeen years old, he received evidence of forgiveness and regeneration which he never afterward doubted. When he was twenty-three years old, after having taught school for several years, he felt the call to preach the Gospel. He was offered work as a supply pastor on the Decatur Circuit of the Holston Conference. It was a severe trial for him to leave his widowed mother, sisters and brothers for the work of the ministry. He hesitated to respond to a call which would seem to deprive those dependent upon him of their necessary support. But so great was his sense of duty that he prayed that God would confirm the impression in some powerful way. It was at Rocky Gap, at the close of a sermon when the Holy Spirit so filled him that he could neither speak nor move, and he was carried from the pulpit as one dead. After this, he never doubted the propriety of his fully entering the work. His mother has the following entry in her diary: "Friday, November 21, 1856 — William E. Munsey left home this morning. It was a sorrowful morning indeed. My lonely children and myself, weeping for my child, who had been our support. We are now left in the hands of God. He will provide for me. I have always prayed for that child, that the Lord would take him to Himself and make a preacher of him; and I feel more than thankful this day that such has been my prayer. I implore Heaven this morning, with all that a Mother's heart can wish and feel, for the blessing to rest upon my son and make him useful in the cause of his Master."

He was licensed to preach September 1, 1855, and received into Holston Conference in 1860. He was married to Miss Virginia Blair of Jonesboro, Tennessee, on May 17, 1860, by the Rev. David Sullins. He served pastoral charges in Holston Conference for several years and in 1866 transferred to the Baltimore Conference and was stationed at Alexandria, Virginia, and later at Central Church, Baltimore, Maryland. He served as Secretary of Foreign Missions for one term, and at his own request was located and moved to Jonesboro, Tennessee. From this place as a base, he traveled extensively throughout the South, lecturing and preaching. His sermons attracted immense congregations and the churches were always crowded to over-flowing whenever it was known that he

was to preach. His fame as a preacher spread far and wide and he was in constant demand for all grand occasions.

He was a member of the Louisiana Conference at one time and was stationed at the St. Charles Avenue Church, New Orleans.

Dr. Munsey was both a philosopher and poet. His reasoning faculties were strong and well-developed. His social and moral qualities were of the best character. He was as humble and simple in his manner as a child. His conversation and manners were always characterized by the most perfect good nature. He had not a particle of malice or revenge in his nature and was careful never to speak evil of anyone.

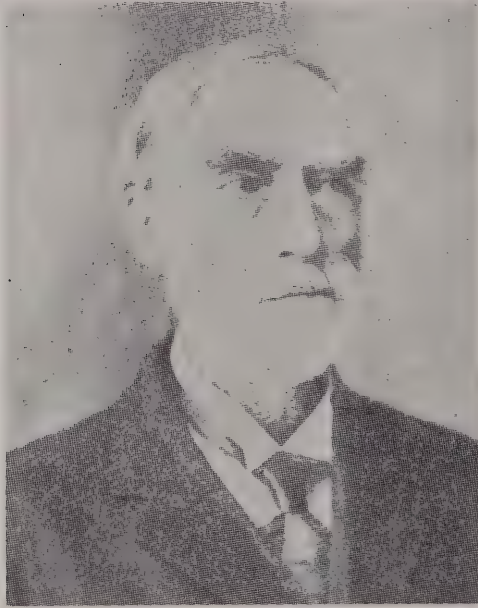
Dr. Munsey was a wonderful man — wonderful in his fervid, brilliant imagination; wonderful in the ready grasp of his intellect; wonderful in his power of close and thorough investigation; and wonderful in his simplicity and affability in the social circles, although when but a youth he was left in charge of his mother's family and in absolute poverty. He toiled on, plowing and reading at the end of the furrow. And in a life not much exceeding forty years he made himself in the true sense, "A workman that needeth not to be ashamed."

He died in Jonesboro, Tennessee on October 23, 1877, leaving his widow and five children.



Marker on U. S. Highway 21 and 52  
in Bland County, Virginia

## REV. JACOB SMITH



Jacob Smith was born in Wythe County, Virginia, October 20th, 1835. He was converted and joined the church in 1851, and two days later made his decision to enter the ministry. He was licensed to preach at Kimberlin Camp Ground in Bland County, Virginia, in 1857 and admitted to the traveling connection in Holston Conference in October, 1861, with Bishop James O. Andrews presiding. He did faithful work on a number of charges.

In 1868, during the re-construction era, he was sent to a circuit which embraced Sevier County and a part of Blount County in East Tennessee. During the second year of his service there, after being repeatedly warned that he could not preach on that Circuit, he was forcibly ejected from Logan's Chapel Church. The following Sunday, as he was going to another appointment, he was pulled from his horse and, as he lay on the ground, was beaten and kicked. Finally he was tied to an old pine stump where he was lashed repeatedly in an effort to make him promise not to preach the Gospel, which he steadfastly refused to do. The armed ruffians left this man of God with his back

and shoulders a mass of blood and quivering flesh. No reason existed for this barbarous action. Mr. Smith was unknown in that locality until after the close of the war. During the Civil War he preached to both armies "Christ and Him crucified." He did not believe in war, even while in the midst of the bloody strife. He never carried a pistol or any other weapon. His preaching was pre-eminently the gospel of peace.

The vindictive and Satanic teachings of radicalism bore their bitter fruit in the martyrdom of this man of God. As a result of the severe beatings which Mr. Smith received, his vocal chords were injured and he was never able to speak above a whisper. He died at his home in Wythe County, Virginia, in 1912.

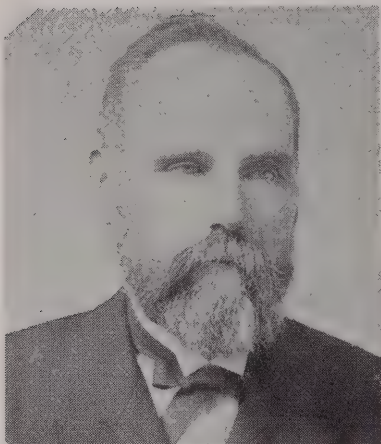
### REV. ROBERT L. NEWBERRY

Rev. Robert L. Newberry was a son of Allen T. Newberry, a farmer and trader of Bland County, and a grandson of Rev. Samuel Newberry, a pioneer minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church in what is now Bland County. His wife was Elizabeth Bogle, a daughter of Robert Bogle. Robert Newberry was born near Bland Court House on New Year's Day, 1834, and was a farmer of the county as well as engaged in the work of the ministry in the Methodist Episcopal Church (South) here. During the Civil War he was exempt from service because of his profession, but he rendered some volunteer service in Missouri and had four brothers in the service, as recorded in the sketch preceding this one. Mr. Newberry was a member of Bland Lodge No. 206, A.F. & A.M.

He was married in Jasper County, Missouri, on October 28, 1858, to Margaret H. Hunter, who was born in Wythe County and reared in Bland County near Mechanicsburg. Their children were four sons and three daughters, born in the order named: John Allen, Mary Elizabeth, Samuel Price, William White, Ella H., Jesse H. and Maggie C. Mrs. Newberry was a daughter of the late Moses Hunter, a farmer, mechanic and mill owner who in 1857 moved from Bland County to Jasper County, Missouri, where he died. Her mother was Elizabeth H., daughter of William Hoge, who was a large-scale farmer and grazier of Pulaski County, Virginia.



## JAMES EDWARD BRUCE



James Edward Bruce was born in Giles (now Bland) County, Virginia, on January 18, 1849. In his veins flowed some of the best blood in Virginia. The Bruces were honest, sturdy, God-fearing people, both in church and in the state. They were always found on the right side of every question which looked toward the betterment of humanity. One of his ancestors, Rev. Joshua Bruce, was one of the four preachers licensed the same day

at Nicewander's Meeting House near Mechanicsburg in Wythe (now Bland) County, Virginia, on July 4, 1812, and his father, J. Henderson Bruce, was a Christian gentleman of very high order. His mother was Miss Margaret Hoge, of the noted Hoge family of Virginia, and directly connected with Moses Hoge, D.D., who at one time exercised such marvelous influence in Richmond, Virginia, and who was perhaps the greatest Presbyterian preacher our Southland has ever produced. She was a sister of Dr. Stafford Hoge of Wise County, Virginia, and Rev. Dr. John H. Hoge of Bland County, Virginia, both of whom in their day were men of much influence and skill.

At the tender age of twelve years, James Bruce was converted to God and affiliated with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and gave not only his heart but his whole life to God. He recognized the fact that he was "saved for service".

Mr. Bruce was well educated; he both wrote and spoke good English — a rather rare accomplishment.

In 1884 he was admitted on trial into Holston Conference and was received into full connection in 1888; and for fourteen years he was a faithful Methodist preacher, serving without complaint where there was much work and little pay until broken health demanded his retirement. He is among the heroes whose names will shine forever

in the memorial hall of eternity.

On March 11, 1891, he was happily married to Miss Edna Miranda Harris, a woman in whose veins flowed the best blood of Tennessee. She was a daughter of Rev. Dr. Alexander Nelson Harris, who at one time was a member of Holston Conference and one of the most brilliant men and greatest orators East Tennessee ever produced. She was a sister of Hon. N. E. Harris, a former Governor of the State of Georgia.

Along all lines James Edward Bruce was cast in a large mold. He had a large body, a large brain, and a heart large enough to take in all humanity.

Perhaps he was at his best in the social circle. A close observer and possessor of an acute sense of humor, he was able to charm all with whom he came in contact, both young and old. His laugh was highly contagious. As a preacher he was clear, strong, forceful, grandly eloquent, and often intensely unctuous. He believed the Gospel and preached it without endeavoring to improve it. The Word did not return unto him void. It bore a blessed fruitage. After his retirement, as often as time, health and opportunity made it possible, he was found in the pulpit. The last Sunday before his death he preached at Oak Dale Schoolhouse near his home. He was called from labor to rest on June 23, 1915.

(Excerpt of Memoir written by Dr. George D. French)

### ERASTUS HARRIS BOGLE

Erastus Harris Bogle was born in Bland County, Virginia, a county noted for the number of Methodist preachers it has given to Holston Conference, in the year of our Lord, 1842. After giving more than forty-five years to the ministry and at the age of 72, he departed this life on December 26, 1914, leaving to his family, his friends and his brethren of Holston Conference the heritage of a long, devoted and well-spent life. He was well born. In his veins flowed some of the best blood of Virginia. The Boggles were upright, staunch men, many of them filling places of responsibility and honor among their fellowmen. His mother was a Munsey, a granddaughter of Rev. Zacariah Munsey, a talented and noted local preacher of

the county. He was a nephew of Rev. T. K. Munsey, who was one of the greatest preachers Holston Conference ever produced; a cousin of Hon T. J. Munsey, a lawyer of unusual ability; and a first cousin of the great Dr. William Elbert Munsey. He sprang from preaching stock and was himself a preacher of rare forcefulness and power.

In 1861 when Virginia and our Southland called upon her sons to defend the rights and honor of state and country, Mr. Bogle, when only about 18 years old, promptly responded and volunteered in the Forty-Fifth Virginia Infantry of the Confederate Army. As a faithful and brave soldier he was always found in his place until, at the battle of Cloyd's Farm, he received a painful and dangerous wound. While recuperating from this wound, and while he was still on crutches, his uncle Hiram Munsey took him to his home and placed him in school. Having good, natural ability and being an excellent student, he made rapid strides in scholarship and he was making equally rapid advancement in Christian character and usefulness. Heeding a clear and imperative call to preach, he was duly licensed and employed as junior pastor on the East Tazewell Circuit where he made good. He was admitted on trial in the Holston Conference in 1869 and was received into full connection in 1874. His name was placed on the Roll of Honor in 1907 where it remained until he was called from labor to reward.

He was thrice married, first to a Miss Moore of Chattanooga, Tennessee; the second wife was a Miss Pass, of Spring City, Tennessee; and the third wife was a Miss Stout, of Limestone, Tennessee. He was the father of eight children, one of whom, Rev. L. P. Bogle, was for many years an honored and useful member of the Western North Carolina Conference.

(Excerpt of Memoir written by Dr. George D. French)

## MARGARET GENEVA MORRIS



Margaret Geneva Morris was born February 6, 1930 in Bland County, Virginia. She is a daughter of Cloyd C. and Reba Tibbs Morris. She joined the Wessendonck Methodist Church when she was sixteen years old, under the ministry of Rev. J. B. Osborne. She made a commitment to full-time Christian service during the ministry of Rev. Virgil Anderson, and at once began preparation for completion of her education. A graduate of Bland High School, she worked at Bland Hosier Mills to secure money to help with her education, afterward entering Asbury College at

Wiltmore, Kentucky. After graduating from Asbury College she attended Scarritt College, Nashville, Tennessee, and taught Bible in the public schools of Wythe County.

In 1955 she was commissioned and sent by the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church to the Mission Field in Japan. Her first assignment was Shibuya in Tokyo where she studied the Japanese language for three years. She was then sent to Hirosaki in northern Japan where she taught in the mission school for two years. Returning home on furlough in July, 1960, she reentered Scarritt College where she is at present working toward her Masters Degree.

Miss Morris is a granddaughter of the late M. C. Tibbs and Mrs. Tibbs of Ceres.





## CHAPTER IX

### SCHOOLS



"May we realize that it is important to know the past only that we may live in the present and look forward to the future." These lines from "A Teacher's Prayer" should kindle a spark of thought as the story of our schools begins.

In the days prior to our public school system and before there was an official Bland County, we find that people in this area attempted to give their children some means of formal education. Private teachers were employed in various homes; or a few families banded together to employ a teacher, provide for board and salary, and conduct a school in some deserted house or church or in a building erected for the purpose. Following is a copy of an agreement between some families who lived in what is now Sharon District and a teacher whom they employed:

### Copy of Article of Agreement

Article of agreement made this 25th day of October, 1820, between Henry Hoppes, Jr., of the County of Wythe and State of Virginia, of the one part and the different subscribers of the other part, WITNESSETH: Of the one part that the said Hoppes does obligate and bind himself to teach a school of spelling, reading, writing and arithmetic, so far as he is capable and the capacity of the scholars will admit, for the term of six months commencing on the sixth of November next, and the said Hoppes does agree to teach five days for every week of the said term, Saturdays and Sundays excepted, and the said Hoppes does obligate himself to keep good order in time of school; and the other part, we the subscribers, do obligate ourselves to furnish the said Hoppes with twenty-five dollars for the said term; we also agree to give him boarding, lodging and washing; we further agree to pay him, the said Hoppes, seventy-five cents per month or four dollars for the said term, to be paid at the expiration of the said term, the school to be taught in the neighborhood of J. Wilson, J. Spangler.

Witness our hands the day and date above written:

John Wilson 4

George Hudson 1

Joshua K..... (not legible)



When the number of pupils justified the building of a schoolhouse, no matter how the selection of a site was determined, it always turned out about the same. Down on the broad creek bottoms, in the valleys of smaller streams, or among the hills where there was a rippling brook — a spot convenient to half a dozen or more homes was agreed upon by the heads of the families, who, without benefit of a contract, went to work and erected a building.

A rude structure it was, perhaps 16 x 20 feet in size with walls built of logs and the interstices chinked with sticks and stone and daubed with clay. The clapboard roof was often held in place by heavyweight poles. The floor was made of puncheons, in all probability; and a fireplace, ample as that of any baron, spanned over half of one end of the building. Logs, split in half, with pins or legs inserted in the oval sides, made the seats. Sometimes a broad slab, resting on wooden pins inserted into the walls, provided a writing desk. Windows were usually a single row of panes.

In the autumn a man would make it known that he was available as a teacher. He brought no credentials from college, but he possessed a keen mind and the self-education which prepared him well to teach the three R's. Some of the early masters were noble scholars of Greek and Latin and could solve the most difficult mathematics problems. Others were not so well qualified, and they were generally those who went from home to home soliciting subscriptions, for they would "keep school" for so much pay. Staying in first one home, then in another, they always provided a question: "Where will they go next?"

There were many hardships and deprivations suffered by both teachers and pupils. Teacher pay was low and the sessions were short. Buildings were poorly lighted and heated, and seats were uncomfortable. Books were always scarce and discipline was extremely rigid. The subjects taught were few but the class work was thorough. Slates were used for practicing penmanship and working arithmetic, but most of the lessons had to be memorized and recited verbatim. A walking distance of three or four miles was not uncommon for many pupils. Sometimes a horse was available for transportation, or the children



boarded in a home near the school during the coldest weather. In spite of such handicaps, however, many of our most prominent and highly honored citizens were products of these early rural schools.

School days were not all bad and everyone seemed to have had a good time. Games such as Ante Over, Tap Hand, Dare Base, London Bridge, and Ball were played; and the nearby forests furnished play areas where little girls built playhouses and "baptized" one another in the fallen leaves.

At Christmas the students expected a candy treat from the teacher, who often found himself being dunked in the cold waters of a nearby creek if he failed to meet their expectations.



### VIRGINIA MADE SEVERAL ATTEMPTS TO ESTABLISH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Public schools in Virginia as we now have them are the outcome of a long, hard struggle against seemingly unconquerable opposition. As early as 1779 a "Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge", sponsored by Thomas Jefferson, Edmund Pendleton and George Wythe, was introduced in the Legislature. However, it failed to pass.

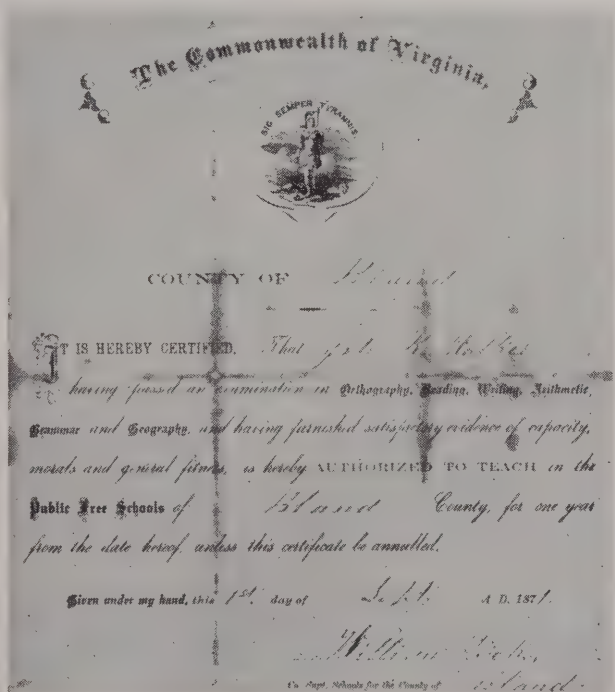
Other proposals came throughout the years but without success. The first effective provision for a public school system of Virginia was adopted after the close of the War Between the States. Segregated public schools were established for whites and Negroes.

In 1870, when Bland County was less than a decade old, public schools in Virginia became mandatory; and in 1871, the free schools were opened in Bland County with Honorable H. W. Broderick as County Superintendent.

Mr. Broderick served in this capacity a very short time and was succeeded by Reverend William Hicks. In that year, 1871, there were 17 schools in operation in Bland County with an enrollment of 704 pupils. When Mr. Hicks resigned in 1877 in favor of Mr. A. B. Honaker, he wrote the following in his record book:

"To my Successor: I have so far ruled to good morals in the case of applicants for certificates, as to send none to trustees for employment who use profane language, drink drams, gamble, dance, or are otherwise of questionable character."

By many citizens, the free school movement was not greeted with smiles. Some of the influences that militated against the system were:



1. Men who had control of affairs were generally opposed to the system, for they felt they were being taxed to educate the poor.

2. The location of schoolhouses was always a "bone of contention," with everyone wanting the house put at his own door.

3. Teachers' salaries were generally so low that the best teachers could not be retained. Fifteen or twenty dollars per month was the average salary in Bland County.

4. Bad school houses were a great drawback. In order to get a free school, authorities would use almost any kind of house.

James T. Taylor, appointed superintendent in 1882, was born in Pulaski County, Virginia, in 1843. After serving in the Confederate Army, he came to Mechanicsburg where he engaged in shoe-making. Here he married Cynthia Wohlford, daughter of Samuel Wohlford. As a very skillful shoemaker, he had the honor of making his wife's wedding shoes. Her opinion was, "They were the prettiest shoes I ever owned." After serving as Superintendent of Schools, his skill was directed toward working with souls rather than soles, and the remainder of his life was spent in the ministry.

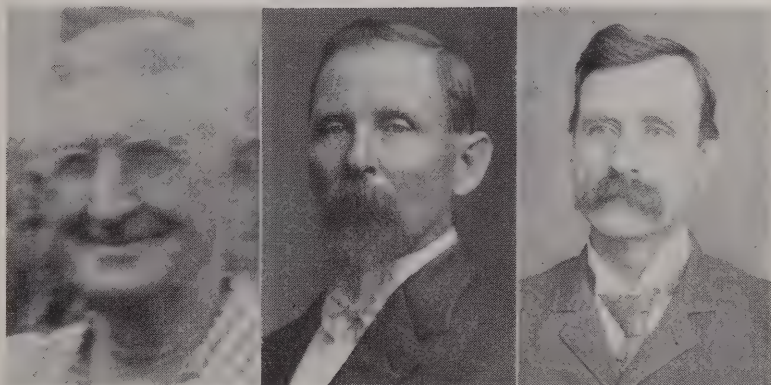
Records show that by the end of his term of office, improvements had been made in the schools. Frame buildings had replaced some of the log houses. There were 12 painted buildings with "green window blinds," and blackboards had been introduced into most schools. The number of schools had doubled and enrollment had gone from 704 to 1,334.

Davis H. Munsey, born in Bland County in the section known as "Burton Hollow", served as superintendent for twenty-four years. He loved his work and always had an interest in better education. At the turn of the century, he reported to the State Superintendent that sentiment with respect to public schools in the county was "growing in favor".

By 1909 when Frank L. Dunn, another Bland County son, took office, interest was beginning to turn to action. People were becoming more and more school-conscious, and between 1909 and 1921, larger and better buildings

were constructed in all of the four districts.

Mr. Dunn had dreams of an improved school system and he worked untiringly to make many of these dreams a reality. As his fellow Kiwanians said of him in their eulogy, "No responsibility was so great, nor a duty so small, that he did not put forth his best effort. He worked as though he would live forever; he lived as though he would die tomorrow." His association with the schools shall long be remembered.



Frank L. Dunn

James T. Taylor

Davis H. Munsey

## 1922, RED LETTER YEAR IN EDUCATION

The County Unit Act, effective for Virginia's schools on September 1, 1922, marked the beginning of a remarkable educational advance.

Since the beginning of free schools in 1870, the District Plan had been in effect, which provided for a school board of three members in each magisterial district in the county. These were appointed by a trustee electoral board composed of the County School Superintendent, the Commonwealth's Attorney, and a citizen selected by the court. Each district board was responsible for the complete operation of schools within its district. As a result of the plan, there were differences in the length of school terms, teachers' salaries, et cetera within the county.



In 1922, the new law created a County School Board, with one member selected from each magisterial district. These four members, meeting together, could view the school affairs of the county in the light of a common, unified undertaking rather than that of four separate neighborhoods. Nevertheless, in the present day the County Unit Plan has not completely replaced all phases of the District System — the problems of capital outlays still exist, with each district still responsible for capital outlays expenditures within its geographical bounds.

Members of the County School Board are appointed by the School Electoral Board, which is composed of three members selected by the Judge of the Circuit Court of the County.

After the County Unit Plan went into effect, Bland County witnessed progress under the leadership of Dr. J. A. Wagner, County Superintendent. Bland High School was placed on the accredited list and the first school bus operated in 1922-23, making a run from Mr. Meek Tickle's home in the Slide community up Route 42 to Bland High School. The bus, a Model T Ford, seated about 25. It was built by Mr. Jess Rudder and was painted green. The first driver, George Tickle, was succeeded by Ellis Tickle in 1923-24.

In bad weather or when delayed by five or six flats, the trip would often take three hours. On some days the bus would barely arrive before school was dismissed. Much of the time two fenders would be missing, which caused the passengers to be spattered with mud. Among its regular passengers were the Tickle, Brown, Thompson, Bird, and Muncy families.

By the middle 1930's adequate bus transportation was available in all districts, bringing a general move of consolidation in the school system.



**Bland County's First School Bus**

**At the end of 1922  
under District Plan  
Bland County had:**

**At the end of 1960  
under County Unit Plan  
Bland County had:**

1,676	School Population	1,550
1,417	Enrolled in Schools	1,362
939	Average Daily Attendance	1,280
0	Pupils Publicly Transported	1,197
0	Number of Buses	19
146	Term in School Days	180
36	Total Buildings	7
\$40,600.00	Value of School Sites & Buildings	\$643,557.00
47	Total Number of Teachers	53
3	Number Teachers Having Degrees	31
\$516.30	Average Annual Salary of Teachers	\$3,368.00
\$22,763.79	Instructional Costs	\$193,078.24
\$12,545.23	State Funds	\$189,168.46

Study the above data for probable answers as to the part the County Unit Plan played in the improvement of our schools.

During the depression, children at Bastian School were served the first (supplementary) hot lunch ever attempted in the county. Interested patrons and citizens made soup available to underprivileged children at first,

and later to all children for a limited period of time.

In 1939-40 the first lunch program and the first home economics department in the county were started at Bland High School by Miss Ruth Crabtree, home economics instructor from Ceres, under the auspices of the state.

Miss Crabtree, who is now area supervisor for Southwestern Virginia School Lunch Programs, reports that she is "very pleased with the lunch programs which operate in six of the seven schools". In the school term 1960-61, approximately 850 boys and girls are participating daily in the lunch program.

The first and only Elementary Supervisor to be employed in the county was an out-of-countian, Miss Blanche Penny. She served during the school year 1942-43.

During World War II, Bland County Schools felt the impact of the war. Teachers were scarce, attendance decreased, maintenance and replacement of buses and buildings was difficult, and the task of the general school program was enlarged.



**Mr. R. P. Reynolds**  
**Twice Supt. of Bland Co. Schools**

Under the competent leadership of Superintendent R. P. Reynolds, a native of Giles County and now Superintendent of Carroll County Schools, many aspects of the school program were modified and intensified in order to meet the demands and conditions imposed by the war.

Peacetime reconstruction of the school program took place under Superintendent H. C. Groseclose, who served the system for two years, and under Mr. R. P. Reynolds, who was reappointed to the position left vacant at Mr. Groseclose's death.

The county's first maintenance man, Mr. Everette Umbarger, was employed in 1946 and served in this capacity

for ten years. The initiation of this service by Superintendent Reynolds began at a time when it was greatly needed in the post-war days, and it has proved very successful. Mr. Fred Simpkins, the second and present mechanic, was employed in 1956.

Our present superintendent, Mr. James O. Morehead, was born and reared near Point Pleasant in Bland County. The son of Mrs. O. G. Morehead and the late Mr. Morehead, he attended public schools in Bland County, Emory and Henry College, and received his M.A. Degree from George Peabody College in Nashville, Tennessee. He and Mrs. Morehead, the former Eleanor Hoge, and their two sons, Jim Hoge and Larry, live at Bland.

Since his appointment in 1953, Mr. Morehead has proved himself to be abundantly worthy of the trust placed in his capable hands. In spite of the critical shortage of funds that has faced him at various times, the schools have made definite advancement under his direction. Some of the more noteworthy accomplishments include:

1955 — New Rocky Gap High School consisting of the following: cafeteria, gymnasium, toilets and dressing rooms, principal's suite, clinic, library, laboratory, and five classrooms — price: \$198,277.

1955 — New Bastian Elementary School consisting of a multi-purpose room, kitchen, toilets, principal's suite, and four classrooms — price: \$112,215.79.

1955 — Bastian School Bus Garage began operations on January 1 with Mr. J. W. Bergdoll as mechanic. (At his death in 1958, Mr. J. C. Repass succeeded him).

1957 — County high schools adopted the five-year program.

1958 — Ceres High School added a home economics suite for \$12,749.

1961 — Plans and loan application have been approved for an addition to Bland High School embodying the following: seven classrooms, gymnasium, principal's suite, toilets and dressing rooms. This project will be jointly financed by Seddon District (\$175,000) and Mechanicsburg District (\$100,000), and construction will be started upon release of State Literary Fund Money for the purpose.

Mrs. Linnie Kinser Wilson, of lower Wolfe Creek, age 91 and blind, reminisces vividly about some of her ex-



periences in the early schools:

"I remember that the schools I went to had large fireplaces and big logs were burned to heat the room. When I was very young, I remember that two benches were on each side of the fireplace for the older boys and girls to sit on, and a bench right in front of the fire was for us little ones. When our legs got too warm, we just turned around and warmed our backs awhile.

"For our lunch we carried "flour shorts" with cane molasses poured over them. They were in stacks of six and we cut them just like you cut pie. They were good eating!

"When I was seven years old I rode horseback along with my brother and sister, and went to school on Kimberling at the Salem School. We lived in the Hicksville community, but there was no school being taught at Pine Hill one term, so our father thought we must go to Salem. That was a long way to ride horseback. When the weather got colder, we boarded in the home of a Mr. George Miller. The school lasted three months.

"I well remember one day when we were riding home from school. Everything seemed to be going all right when all at once the horse snorted and reared up. Being the little one riding on the back, I screamed, "Hold the reins, she's going to kick up!" Just then a big bear crossed the road right in front of us. The horse had seen that bear before we did. We rode home as fast as we could and told our father what we had seen. He, along with some other men, headed for Kimberling. A light snow had fallen, so without any trouble they tracked down the bear and killed it.



"J. A. Wagner was my teacher at Salem and a good one, too. He was a religious man. Every morning as soon as all the children were in, he would have us stand for scripture and prayer. He always said it was better to stand than to kneel, because we would get our clothes dirty if we knelt.

"When eating time came, we all got our lunch baskets and buckets and then Mr. Wagner said thanks before we ate. He told us that when you eat and don't return thanks, you're like a hog that eats acorns and never looks up to see what he is eating.

"My favorite lessons were reading and spelling. I liked the Dictionary class because I knew I was getting to be a big girl then."

### A BLAND COUNTY NATIVE RECALLS HIS SCHOOL DAYS



"Having been asked to write a narrative of my experience in the public schools of Bland County, I will do so according to the best of my memory.

"My first contact with the schools was in the year 1880 when I was five years of age. As I look back through memory's lane there were lots of snows. I remember father carrying me to school and coming after me in the evening. He was interested in my getting an education. My first book that I recall was McGuffey's Speller — there may have been a simpler book like a primer but I can't recall it. It was on a Sun-

day when Mother was getting dinner; I kept bothering her, asking about different letters and some very simple words in the first pages of the speller. I was able to put them together in a short sentence. My, how thrilled I was over that accomplishment!

"The teachers as I remember them were: Mr. J. A. Wagner, who later became a medical doctor; Mr. S. H. Helvey, who taught for a short number of years; Miss Josie Munsey, who taught only for a short period; Mr. Breckenridge Penley; Reverend George Penley; Mr. James Ashworth, who taught a few years; and Mr. Tom Dunn, who taught for a short period. They were, in the main, good teachers and endeavored to inspire in us high ideals. During the period of the teaching of J. A. Wagner, the school grew in influence to the extent that pupils came from the Pine Grove section of Wolf Creek and boarded in the community while attending the school. On Friday afternoon we had either a forensic exercise or a spelling match.

"The forensic programs consisted of declamations and debates.

"Our books were McGuffey's Speller and readers from first to fourth, Maury's Geography, Ray's Arithmetic, Barn's History of the United States, Magill's History of Virginia, and English grammar. Our schools were not graded and we did not have examinations or tests to see if we were prepared to pass on to more advanced work. At the beginning of each school year, we began a kind of review and continued as rapidly as we could in keeping with the ability of the dull students. At least some of our teachers thought that most of us belonged to that group. When approaching my eighteenth year, we had a teacher whom I thought would be able to teach us some real English grammar. He would give us a lecture on the various phases of the subject, and at the end of the year, if possible, I knew less than I did at the beginning of the year.

"At this period of my life, I availed myself of the opportunity to attend high school at Bland. The principal came to see me, and for my tuition I traded him a young horse. After I had finished that year's work in school, I decided to take the examination for teachers which was given at Bland. I succeeded in getting a certificate and was given a school at Flea Hollow. I taught there for two years, or two schools. Following this I taught one year each at Crandon and Holly Brook. After going to Emory and Henry College for two years, I taught one year in the old log church at Salem.

"Our superintendent was Mr. D. H. Munsey. He was supposed to visit the schools once each year. I remember how the students dreaded to see him come as he would call a class or two and ask them questions, sometimes staying most of one-half day. The contracting of the teachers was given to the trustee of the district.

"Our pay was determined by the grade of our certificate. There were three grades: First, Second and Third. The corresponding salaries were \$25.00, \$20.00, and \$15.00 per month. Our school's duration was sometimes three months and sometimes four months.

"I have many pleasant memories from my having been associated with the schools of Bland County. I made many friends who have already crossed the bar, and I hope to renew that friendship when I have crossed."

J. W. Helvey, Sr.,  
Emory, Virginia

### JAMES SAMUEL ASHWORTH

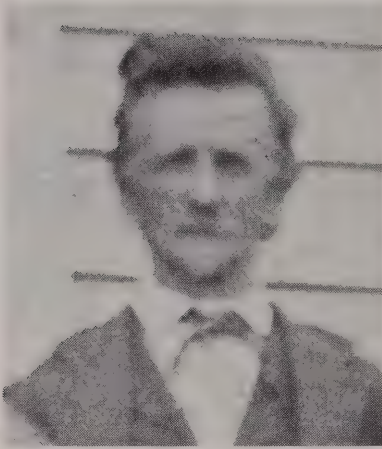


A popular and well-known teacher was James Samuel Ashworth. He was born on June 6, 1874 and was the son of William B. and Martha Compton Ashworth. He attended the county schools, Emory and Henry College, and Concord College. After serving quite some time as a teacher in the public schools, he accepted employment with the Internal Revenue Department. He held this position for several years un-

til his retirement because of ill health. He died in August, 1935.



## GEORGE W. PENLEY



George W. Penley, a native of North Carolina, came to Bland County when a young man. He was well-educated and perhaps deserves as much credit as any one individual for the promotion of schools in the early days.

The originator of Point Pleasant Academy and a licensed Methodist minister, he also taught in the free schools. Each morning he opened the school day with prayer, scripture, and song, and closed with

prayer in the afternoon. Oftentimes his closing prayer was interrupted by impatient students tiptoeing to the door, but after order was restored the prayer was completed.

It is said that Mr. Penley was the first to introduce baseball into this area.

## TIMOTHY ELIJAH MITCHELL



Timothy Elijah Mitchell, originally from Bedford County, Virginia, was an early teacher in our county whose services were in demand. Teaching in various schools, he moved quietly and slowly in the classroom, as he did among his fellowmen. At times he seemed oblivious to his surroundings. He was an excellent disciplinarian and once, when asked how he knew so much about his students' behavior in the classroom, he replied, "You

can see a great deal through pin-holes in a newspaper.”

As J. T. Taylor said of him, “He burned the midnight lamp and was a student of all around him.” He was a self-educated man and was well-qualified to teach different subjects. He lived to attain the age of 84, passing away in 1916.

### JAMES THOMAS DUNN



James Thomas Dunn, a teacher and county surveyor, was born July 13, 1876, in Bland, Virginia. He was educated at Sharon College and Roanoke College at Salem, Virginia. He taught in the schools of Wythe County where he became assistant principal of Wytheville High School.

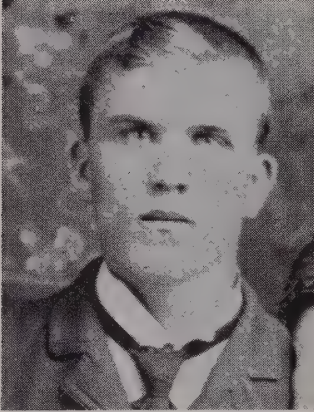
After returning to Bland he was made principal of Cove Creek and Mechanicsburg Elementary Schools and in 1914 he became principal of Bland High

School where he taught until he retired.

He was superintendent and teacher of the Adult Bible Class of St. Matthews Lutheran Sunday School for forty years.

He died October 24, 1954.

### R. LEE MILLIRONS (1875-1933)



R. Lee Millirons, a teacher and certified surveyor, was born in Pulaski County and moved to Long Spur in Bland County around the turn of the century.

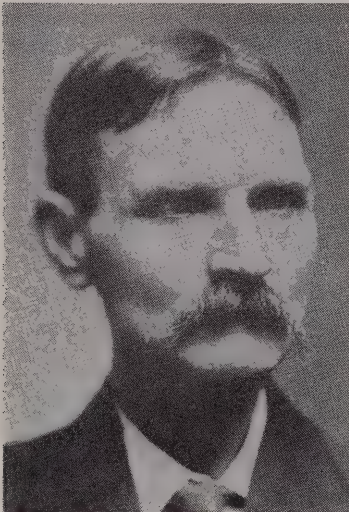
His formal education was procured in Pulaski grade schools and through study of his own he became well-qualified in many subjects.

He was influential in the establishment of the post office at the head of Little Walkers Creek in 1916, and named that post office Carnot after the

French president whom he admired greatly.

Thirty years of his life were spent in the field of teaching. He is remembered as a sincere, efficient instructor who was loved by his students.

### MARION RADFORD



The late Marion Radford, a pioneer educator and teacher in the schools in Bland, retired in 1921 with more than thirty years of service to his credit. It is said he was the first teacher to qualify for retirement with a pension from our county.

He is remembered as an able and sincere instructor, an eloquent speaker and a superb scribe. He made a lifelong fight for the improvement of schools and roads in his section of the county. In addition, he was a local Methodist minister and engaged in revival meet-

ings with the noted Robert Sheffey. He passed away in 1935 at the age of 69.



## MARK HAGER



Mark Hager, another Bland County teacher, has become a noted writer. Born near Rocky Gap, he attended one-room schools and later taught at Radford and Salem schools.

Over the years Mr. Hager has had fiction works published in many leading magazines, and his some 250 short stories have been reprinted in foreign countries and for production on television. The seventh grade reader currently in use in our county contains

one of his stories.

Editors of big publications, amazed that he had no journalism in college, attribute his success to the fact that he grew up on the mountainside in Bland County and was educated in the one-room schools. His characters are the lovable people of Bland County; his writing is earthy and real. He has been paid more than a thousand dollars for some of his Bland County stories.

## MISS NAOMI WAGNER AND MISS EFFIE WAGNER



Miss Naomi Wagner and Miss Effie Wagner (Mrs. John C. Mustard), daughters of Dr. and Mrs. J. A. Wagner,



taught in the public schools of Bland County.

Miss Naomi devoted twenty-five years of her life to teaching before retiring. She died in 1957 at the age of 75.

Mrs. Mustard, who now resides in Bland, taught six terms before her marriage. They both attended Martha Washington College.

### MRS. W. S. WADDELL

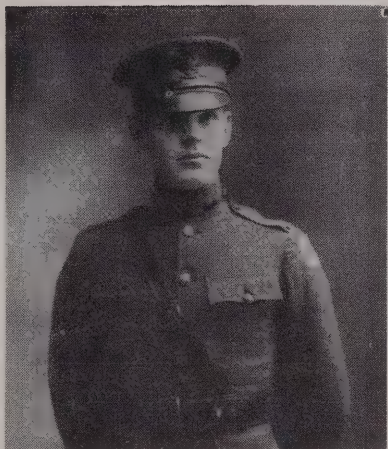


Mrs. W. S. Waddell, nee Lena Gollehon, a native of Bland, now resides at Wytheville. She attended Emory and Henry College and later taught seventeen schools in the county. It was during her teaching at the Kirby School, about four miles west of the county seat, that she met her husband-to-be as he drove his beautiful cattle past the school time after time.

She holds the distinction of instructing the one and only summer school for adults in the history of this county.

As a result of his keen interest in education, her superintendent, Frank L. Dunn, secured permission from the state for classes to be conducted at Liberty School for citizens in that area. Around twenty-two students were enrolled, ranging in age from the teens to thirty.

## HAYNES HOGE BRUCE



Haynes Hoge Bruce was born September 14, 1894 in Washington County, Tennessee, the son of Reverend and Mrs. James Edward Bruce. After graduating from Bland High School in 1911, he entered Emory and Henry College where he received his A.B. Degree. The first school he served as teacher was the old Oak Dale School in Bland County, and he was principal of Bland High School in 1915-16.

In 1917 he served as a lieutenant at Meuse-Argonne and Verdun, after which he resumed teaching.

He was principal of Mechanicsburg High School in Bland County and White Gate High School in Giles County. He also taught at The Hill School in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, and the Boys' Latin School in Baltimore. In 1928 he entered Columbia Teachers' College in New York City where he took his Master's Degree in 1929.

After again serving as principal of Bland High School, he taught at Virginia High School, Bristol, Virginia. He then served as superintendent of Pulaski County Schools for a number of years until ill health forced his retirement in 1939.

He was a member of the Methodist Church, was active in the Masonic Lodge, and was a member of Kazim Temple of the Shrine, Roanoke, Virginia. He was instrumental in organizing Bland Chapter 41, Order of the Eastern Star, and Miller T. Burton Post 20, American Legion.

He died February 14, 1944.

## TEACHER'S INSTITUTE, 1915-1916, BLAND COURT HOUSE



Front row (sitting), left to right: Edgar Miller; unknown; Edgar H. Millirons, Pulaski, Virginia, retired Pulaski County Surveyor; Frank Dunn, deceased, Superintendent of Bland County Schools, 1915-1916; unknown. Back row (standing), left to right, (x) denotes deceased: Jim Ashworth (x); G. L. Jordan (x); R. Lee Millirons (x), Long Spur, Virginia; H. L. Graham (x), Pulaski, Virginia, Principal of Bland High School, 1913-1914; Guy B. Dunn (x); K. Thompson (x); Miss Lute Finley (Mrs. Claude Scott), Lynchburg, Virginia; Haynes Bruce (x), Principal of Bland High School, 1915-1916, and Superintendent of Pulaski County Schools; Miss Naomi Wagner (x); Miss Fay Finley (Mrs. Carl Webb), Lynchburg, Virginia; Mrs. Loretta Dunn (Mrs. W. S.) (x); unknown; Miss Hazel Bruce (Mrs. G. R. Repass); unknown; Miss Lizzie Danwood (Mrs. W. C. Tickle) (x); Miss Dorothy Hill (Mrs. J. E. Guthrie), Radford, Virginia; Miss Ruth Dunn; Miss Cynthia Brown (Mrs. Porterfield) (x); Miss Mary Newberry Greever; Miss Mabel Groseclose, Ceres, Virginia; Miss Virginia Brown; Ada Suiter (Mrs. H. L.) (x); Miss Rosa Ashworth (x); unknown; Miss Anna Muncy.

## MECHANICSBURG DISTRICT SCHOOLS

Mechanicsburg being the oldest village in the county, it is not known where a school was first held. However, it was related by the late Mrs. Sallie Mustard Stuart that she attended school at an early age in a house near the "town spring," today referred to as the Bernard House. This was in the very late 1860's, in all probability.

Later school was taught in the Byrnes Chapel Church.

A civic and educationally-minded citizen, A. G. Updyke (Major), offered the use of land just above the

Byrnes Chapel Church as a site for a school, with the provision that the land was to revert to heirs of the original holder when the school ceased to function. The school, thought to have been built around 1871 or 1872, was named Forest Glynn, commonly called Byrnes Chapel School. The building contained two rooms and was heated by stoves, and Major Updyke was the first teacher.

The present Mechanicsburg School, originally a three-room frame building constructed at a cost of \$1,500, was ready for occupancy in January, 1911. At this time the Byrnes Chapel School moved to the new building, with Joe Kent Roberts as principal.

Everyone in the community looked upon the new school with pride. It can be recalled that an early principal, a Mr. Whitt, had an outing cover made to slip over the newly-bought piano to protect it from dust and the nimble fingers of school girls. The piano was finally locked to keep the girls from playing it, but when one persistent dame discovered that a sewing machine key unlocked the lid, all mothers around had sewing machine keys disappear.

Work through the tenth grade was offered at one time. An extra classroom was added around 1932 and the building was almost completely renovated around 1937. "Running" water was piped into the building, indoor toilets were installed, a new stage with footlights was built, new and better folding doors were installed in the classroom-auditorium section, and the building was brick-veneered.

In 1940 the high school department transferred to Bland, and the school has remained elementary since that time.

Principals since 1911, not in order of succession, were: Joe Kent Roberts, a Mr. Whitt, John R. Hayes, Vashti Howard, Rev. Ellis, J. E. Guthrie, Zozo Dixon, Ruth Jones, Haynes Bruce, Carl Vaughan, H. C. Joyner, Rev. Linkous, N. P. Stockner, Watson Helvey, Jr., Joe L. Kincheloe, Olin Munsey, Walter E. Mustard, Claude S. Stowers, Rosa Stowers (Mrs. Irvin Gordon), Mrs. Garland Mustard, and Harry S. Bird.

Some early schools in the Walkers Creek Valley and surrounding the Mechanicsburg area include the Bogle School, which stood somewhat east of the present John



Bogle, Sr. farm; the Forks-of-Creek School; Flea Hollow; and the Wire Bridge School.

The Forks-of-Creek School was a one-room building on the Giles County side until 1901, at which time another room was added which stood on the Bland side. Sometimes teachers were employed for both rooms, at other times there would be only a "Bland teacher" or a "Giles teacher". Today one of our school bus drivers, Wallace Warner, and his family occupy the building, which was converted into a dwelling some years ago. "Eating in one county, sleeping in the other" is life in this divided house.

The name of Flea Hollow School originated from the crawling, biting fleas. Tradition is that in the early days of the school, hogs sought shelter under the building. A result was that fleas infested the surroundings. At times efforts were made to change the name to Rich Hollow School but to no avail. The name (whether spelled Flea or Flee is not certain — some prefer the latter) was certainly no hindrance to the efficiency of the school; some of the best teachers taught there and some of our finest citizens were taught there.

The Wire Bridge School, built in 1899, stood near Kimberling Creek on a site which is now a part of Bland Correctional Farm. The school mainly served the families of Allens, Mustards, Fannings, and Wrights, who lived nearby.

## LOWER LITTLE CREEK SCHOOLS

The Little Creek School, on the south side of Walkers Mountain, was built on land originally homesteaded by the Wamplers.

A school by day, the building served as a community meeting place at night. Spelling matches and debates were held. A dance was a welcome feature, at which time Charles Hancock played the French harp, danced, whistled, and sang. "How I Love My Darling" was a favorite tune.

The legend is told that several hundred acres of land, a part of which has always been the site of a Spur Branch School, was bought by a family named Slaughter in exchange for an old mountain rifle. The land later was pur-

chased by Danie Hamblin and has remained in the Hamblin family since.

The first schools were taught in the church, a typical log building of the time. Then, in 1889, lumber was sawed for a separate building at Booker Nunn's sawmill on Kimberling, which was the nearest mill. Mr. Robert Kitts recalls using a four-horse wagon to haul the lumber the 30 miles from the mill to the school site.

Miss Ocie Powers, of Mechanicsburg, recalls her teaching days at Spur Branch. The journey back and forth from home to school, which she made several times during a session, was a difficult one. Part of the trip was on horseback and the rest was on foot across Walkers Mountain.

This building was replaced in 1934 when C. A. Davis sawed and furnished the material. Cecil Byrd was head carpenter, assisted by W. H. Hamblin, E. C. Hamblin, W. W. Meadows, Sid Hancock, Elliott Williams, Alva Corder, Bobby Davis and Houston Brunk. The first teacher in the "new" building was Lorine Updyke, who, after intervening years, returned there as Mrs. Frank Wagner and is the present teacher.

## CRANDON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Tradition has it that the first school at Crandon was an old log house at or near the present site of C. R. Patton's home on Route 42. Henrietta Mustard, who later married Charlie L. Mustard, taught in this building.

Since no exact date is known, it is believed that in the late 1870's or early 1880's a one-room frame building was erected where the Presbyterian Church now stands. It was called Cave Spring School, the name being derived from a cave on Route 42 now known as Patton's Cave. Susan V. Thomas was the grantor of the land and Will Stuart constructed the building. Hannah Thorn was the first teacher.

This school remained in operation until after the turn of the century. When construction of the Presbyterian Church began in 1911, the school was moved directly across the road. It was used as a practice room by the Crandon

Citizens' Band, and part of the time by J. S. Bernard, merchant, as a storage room for caskets. Often the bandmen sat on the wooden boxes while they practiced their musical selections.

After the band ceased functioning, the building was razed and some of its material went into the construction of Crandon's present day post office. It is situated some 100 yards east of the school's original site, and many of its planks can be traced to the school by the marks and scratches on them.

A one-room school named Rock Glen was built in 1903 to serve the area immediately south of Crandon. Dr. Daniel Miller donated the land, which was located approximately one-fourth mile northeast of the C. M. Bane residence. Among the early teachers were Lou Robertson, Cecil Wohlford, Mabel Groseclose, and Nell Peery.

Students at Rock Glen, certainly little different from those of today, enjoyed "vacation" from classes at times. They rejoiced to see a certain young man approach their school riding a white horse when Miss Nell Peery was the teacher. This gentleman was her beau, and he would stop for a chat with her whenever opportunity presented itself. While they chatted the students took turns riding the horse, often to the point of near-exhaustion. In March of that year Miss Peery became the bride of Mr. John Fanning, and school was closed for the session.

This school was consolidated with Mechanicsburg after the high school building was erected.

### HOLLYBROOK AREA SCHOOLS

So far as is known, school in the Hollybrook community had its origin in what was called the "Old John Harman House", a structure which stood on the farm owned by Major Bill Harman. A log house with a rock chimney and one small window, it might have been originally a slave house.

Mr. Doc Wright taught in this building, followed by Greeley Harman, a son of Major Bill.

Greeley was an extremely tall man, towering nearly seven feet. He used the "hickory stick" with considerable

alacrity as a disciplinary measure but was considered an excellent teacher. He was not a handsome man, but was admired and respected in the community. As a young man he received a leg injury which caused him to be lame the rest of his life. One day his father ordered a colored employee to chop down a certain tree — Greeley told him not to cut it. When the Negro indicated that he was going to obey the Major, Greeley threw out his leg to stop him, thereby receiving the injury. The lameness, however, did not interfere with his active duties as a teacher, and he played "Dare Base" and other games with the children at recess time.

The following excerpt is from page 211 of the "Harman Genealogy":

"William H. Greeley Harman was educated in the public schools of Virginia and attended the Sharon Springs School in Bland County, Virginia, which was taught by Prof. W. A. Evans, a leading educator of Southwest Virginia. Before leaving Bland County for Arkansas, W. H. G. Harman taught eight terms in the public schools there. He now owns a ranch in Arkansas and is engaged in farming and stock raising."

The first building known to have been erected especially for a schoolhouse stood northeast of the present school, on the opposite side of the road near the site of the old Odd Fellows Building. Its construction date is not known; however, the building is known to have been in use more than seventy years ago.

A log building one and one-half miles east of Hollybrook, known as Shiloh School, accommodated children in the area between the Brook and Dismal Creek. This served for both church and school until it burned in 1910.

One mile west of Hollybrook, land was purchased from I. F. DeHart in 1913 for a one-room school named the DeHart School. It stood where Shady Grove Church now stands. Meeting the needs of the children for several miles around, it was in use until the late 1920's or early 1930's when it was consolidated with Hollybrook School.

In 1918, in favor of a more nearly centralized location, the building which stood near the old Odd Fellows Building was razed and another was built to the east near "Rabbit



Squat" road. A two-roomer, it was used until the present-day Hollybrook School was constructed and is now a dwelling house.

Today's Hollybrook School stands but a short distance from the spot where this section's formal education first began in the "Old John Harman House". Land was bought from Mr. and Mrs. John C. Mustard, and was part of the original Major Bill Harman farm. The frame building was erected in 1927 at a cost of \$4,000.

It comprised three rooms at first, but increased enrollments required additional rooms until six classrooms and a lunchroom were realized. In the 1950's, indoor toilet facilities and a central heating system were installed.

Hollybrook remained a junior high school until 1954. A decreased enrollment plus adequate bus transportation dictated the wisdom of closing down the secondary school department and transporting its students to the high schools at Bland and Rocky Gap.

The school's first principal was Miss Naomi Wagner, her associates being Rosa Stowers and Helen Arthur. Others who have served as principal are Trubie Mitchell, Olin Munsey, Harry S. Bird, J. P. Whitt, Garland L. Updyke, Otho Cassell, and Mrs. Garland Mustard.

Work through the seventh grade is presently taught. The white frame building is surrounded by one of the most suitable playgrounds in the county. The smooth, naturally level land stretches mostly eastward from the building, with forests and mountain-tops towering in the distance on all sides.

A typical early school of this section was that known as McNeil School, a one-room log building that served as church and school house. Built in 1897, it was located near the present home of L. D. Morehead. When Mr. C. R. Burton was interviewed in September, 1960, he recalled two of his teachers at this school: Levi McNeil and John Dunnagan, both masters at teaching as well as using the stick. No one who deserved it was spared, not even Mr. McNeil's brothers.

Amazed at the changes time has wrought, Mr. Burton described his life as a school boy:

"I sat on benches without backs from 8:00 a.m. until

4:00 p.m. At night I studied by light from burning pine knots in the open fireplace. School sometimes lasted just one and one-half months a year; at other times, three months. Our favorite game was 'The Bull Pen' and my favorite subject was arithmetic."

The Nobusiness School, a frame building about five miles north of Hollybrook, operated from about 1900 until 1935. Although it stood on the Giles County side, many Bland County children attended there because it was the only school convenient to them. Some of the Bland Countians who taught there were J. C. French, J. W. Roberts, Trubie Mitchell, Mae Lambert, Kathleen Walters, Jessie Wright, Hazel Short, Irene Vest, and Nancy Sexton.

Radford School was built shortly after 1900 to accommodate the forty or more children who lived on the south side of Rich Mountain. When the section was settled, mainly by the Frenchs, Clarks, Hagers, and Shraders, Mr. Marion Radford donated land for the school, persuaded the county fathers to build it, and taught there himself for several sessions. The school was named for him.

At Kimberling, two Salem Schools have functioned at different times. The first, a log building, stood on the exact location of the present-day Salem Church. Dating back to the middle 1860's or earlier, it was used both for church and school until about 1907 when it was razed and work on Salem Church began. The church was dedicated in June, 1908.

Inside the thick, rough walls of the old log building, many girls and boys learned their three R's. Such masters as Clay Bogle, John Helvey, Houston Helvey, Watson Helvey, Greeley Harman, Jim Brown, and J. A. Wagner taught. It was here that J. A. Wagner selected a bride from among his students, Miss Josephine Miller.

After the old Salem School was torn down, a frame building was erected one-fourth mile east of the old site on land purchased from George W. Miller. This school operated until about 1943 when it was consolidated with Hollybrook.

Miss Naomi Wagner finished her teaching career at the new Salem School, with 25 years of service to her credit. Her father, J. A. Wagner, taught his first school in the old Salem log building.

## POINT PLEASANT AND UPPER WALKERS CREEK VALLEY SCHOOLS

Many of the following facts are from a story of "Walkers Creek Valley", prepared by Mr. Arista T. Harman as a gift to his children.

The earliest known school in the Point Pleasant community was the Cubine School which was built in 1855. There is a strong possibility that it was the first school building in Bland County. Located south of Point Pleasant along Walkers Creek, the structure stood on the exact spot where Mevo Harman now lives. The land was donated by Sidney Harman, who was a daughter of Adam Harman and who had inherited land along Walkers Creek from her father. Sidney married William Cubine, thus was the naming of the school.

The building was made of logs with a twelve foot fireplace in one end. The benches were made of split logs. As was often the case, this building was used for both school instruction and divine worship.

The church group which met there for worship was composed of 36 white people and eight Negroes who were slaves. Among the whites were three Harman Methodist preachers; among the Negroes was one preacher.

These slaves had a certain time set aside for them to have worship services of their own. Their preacher had no formal education but he had much of the divine spirit. Using the talents that God had given him, he led his people in some great meetings. He would always thank the Lord and the masters of the slaves for freeing them long enough to go to church.

A story at the Cubine School dates back to 1857: The teacher was Old Tom Munsey. (He is called Old Tom because there is another Tom later). Old Tom was an educated man for the day and time, and he was a very good teacher. He was also a lawyer. The Reverend George W. Penley once said that Mr. Munsey was so very intelligent that he could write a business letter and carry on a conversation at the same time.

Mr. Munsey was an austere master, dedicated to passing on the torch of knowledge and using the rod when necessary. He expected perfect lessons from his pupils,

and if any of them came up with poorly prepared lessons he had the "difference" sitting in the corner.

One day he crossed the creek on a tree lap and went to a haystack on the other side where he kept his gallon jug. After partaking of the contents, he started back across the same tree lap but his balance wasn't so good. Down into the water he fell! Before he reached the schoolhouse his clothes were frozen and icy. The pupils were somewhat frightened of him. In this condition they knew he would really be strict on them for the remainder of the day. To their surprise, however, he was gentle and kind. He said, "Get your books and go home until in the morning."

This school was abandoned in 1877.

### BOGLE SCHOOL

The Bogle School, which stood about seventy-five feet west of Chafe Pauley's present home, was erected in 1858.

One of the masters of this school, Edward Bruce, who later became a Methodist minister, is fondly remembered by a surviving student as a "kind, patient teacher who took the little children, one on each knee, and taught them their ABC's."

At one time a one-room log school stood about one-half mile east of the J. S. Penley residence. Serving as both a church and school, the building was discarded in 1887 at which time the School Board built a frame building one-fourth mile north of the Penley home. This was known as the High Rock School.

The school had a large enrollment, including grown men and women, and could boast of two good baseball teams.

### POINT PLEASANT ACADEMY

Point Pleasant Academy had its origin in 1866 as a result of the efforts of George Penley and others. Records verify that payment of \$10.00 was received by Bluford Oxley for laying a porch floor at the Academy in 1867.



A two-room log structure, it stood 300 yards east of the much later Slide High School and to the front of the old church. The use of the land was donated by F. G. Helvey and the school was built by private subscriptions. Some citizens donated as much as \$25.00.

Mr. Penley served as principal, assisted by Mr. Starnes and then by Thomas J. Muncy. Courses in both elementary and secondary branches were offered. Latin, Greek, advanced grammar, and higher math were pursued by a small per cent of pupils. A small tuition was charged which aided in raising the teachers salaries to \$25.00 per month. The school session was from three to five months. Pupils from nearby counties also attended.

The school was closed around 1883.

### VALLEY VIEW SCHOOL

The Valley View School was built in 1885, with J. H. Munsey donating the land and Daniel L. Tickle furnishing the material. The logs were cut on a cliff near the present Luther Blankenship home and were dragged on the frozen waters of Walkers Creek to a mill one-half mile downstream where they were sawed.

This building was dedicated by Dr. John Hoge when he preached Captain George Bogle's funeral. Immediately following, a revival was held by Dr. John Hoge, Jacob Smith, and Robert Sheffey.

### THE SLIDE SCHOOL

On February 14, 1882, Dr. William E. Hoge donated the use of one acre of land, 400 yards northwest of the Point Pleasant Academy site, for a log school known as the Slide School.

The log building was in use until the Point Pleasant High School was constructed in 1909 at a cost of \$1,500.00. Records show that W. H. Hoge deeded two acres of land to the school trustees for this site.

A typical school in a rural community, activities of the people centered around it. In the fall, "Parents Day"

was observed when parents came with lunch baskets and working implements. All was put into readiness for winter — wood was cut, the outdoor toilets were mended, the bridge that spanned the creek was repaired, the spring was cleaned, and sometimes a snake or two was beheaded.

In the springtime all thoughts turned to commencement, which usually consisted of two nights. One night was for oratorical contests with the great orator of all times being Keithley Umbarger; the other night was reserved for the presentation of a play. In the late teens and early twenties, students who displayed great dramatic abilities were: G. R. "Park" Brown, Sinclair Brown, Woodson Thompson, "Boo" Hutchinson, Glen Morehead, Lena Thompson, Clara Tickle, Mae Chewning and Sue Munsey.

At one time work through the 10th grade was offered. Around 1932 the high school department was transferred to Bland, and a two-room elementary school operated for a while. Shortly afterward only one room existed and finally the school was completely abandoned around 1943.

Principals who served in the old and new buildings were: George Penley, Thomas Dunn, a Mr. Young, Elbert Rhodes, J. S. Ashworth, Rosa Ashworth, W. B. Ashworth, J. A. Wagner, Price Bird, George Studebaker, John Boyd, a Mr. Eason, Maude Kegley, Nell Eaton, Hattie Stowers, Henry Stradley, N. P. Stockner, L. S. Meriwether, John Graybeal, and Joe L. Kincheloe.

## **ROCKY GAP DISTRICT SCHOOLS ROCKY GAP COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

The first known school in Rocky Gap was taught in a church which stood in a little flat near the creek at the mouth of Long Hollow and the present site of Camp Obediah.

This building has been described in history as a place where Confederate supplies were kept during the War Between the States. The building was burned by the Confederates when they learned that the Yankees were coming in that direction from Princeton. The Yankees came through and headed for Cloyd's Mountain, using the Wilderness Road as their route.

A teacher who taught in the above-mentioned building was William E. Munsey, who later became a minister of great renown. At one time, William's father, David Munsey, who was also a Methodist minister, lived in the community.

It was during the time of teaching here that William became sincerely interested in the ministry. One day he took some boys with him — John Allen Davidson, his two younger brothers, William and Henry Davidson, and a young man named Tracy — and the five of them climbed up the mountain side. William stood on a high rock on the end of Rich Mountain and preached to the boys for practice. He selected his text from Matthew 16:18 — "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." This was his first great sermon. Today a roadside marker has been placed between South Gap and Rocky Gap which calls the attention of passing motorists to "A Great Preacher."

The following is an excerpt from Johnston's "History of the Middle New River Settlements" — page 126:

William E. Munsey was born and spent a part of his early life in or near that wild, rough section of Giles County, now Bland County, and known as Dismal. At a camp-meeting held at Wabash in the year 1866 or 1867, William E. Munsey preached on Sunday at 11 o'clock a.m. on the subject of "Hell and the Lost Soul". A large and attentive audience heard him, among which was Captain John A. Pack, who was equipped with a keen sense of humor. Captain Pack walked up and joined a number of friends and acquaintances and inquired if they knew how Rev. Munsey had acquired such a clear conception of Hell. Someone inquired, "Why?" to which the captain replied: "Because he was raised up on Dismal."

Another school that we can assume was built just after the War Between the States stood almost opposite the present site of Camp Obediah. Mr. John Allen Davidson provided the lumber for the building.

During the same time that school was being taught in this building, a log building in the settlement of Rocky Gap on Laurel Creek was in use.

## ROCKY GAP SCHOOLS

The first frame building, circa 1890, was a one-room pine structure with vertical planking and was situated about one hundred yards south of the present elementary school. It was typical in size and furnishings for that era, having split-log benches set against the walls and a log burning stove in the middle of the room. Wiley Hager is believed to have been the first schoolmaster, with other early teachers being Nannie Hedrick, her sister, Pocahontas Hedrick, Digsby Repass, James Gollehon, Virginia Graves (may have been Gray or Grayson instead of Graves), J. C. Tuggle, and J. W. Stowers. Mr. Tuggle relates that he had 32 pupils, taught all grades, and was paid \$25.00 per month.

This building was replaced in 1917 by another with two rooms, cloakrooms and an entrance porch. John Lambert and C. L. Morehead built it on the original site. A third classroom was added in 1919 or 1920 from lumber furnished by Mr. Bell, manager of a thriving flooring plant.

This was replaced in the early 1920's by a new four-room building which served as the first high school as well as an elementary school. Leonard B. Stowers recalled that he and other patrons each contributed five dollars to pay for the site. Paul E. Goodman, principal, and two teachers (Cecil Robinette and Mabel Atwell) taught every class from the first through the tenth grade. When the building burned in 1927 the old three-room building was used while the initial phase of the present-day school was being built.

The first brick building was completed in 1931 at a cost of \$7,000.00, with Iris Jones the first principal. Two classrooms were added in 1949-50 with Bruce Robertson the first instructor. The most recent addition was the main building which was dedicated in 1956.

An incomplete list of principals at Rocky Gap includes Earl D. Flory, Porter Stafford, R. P. Reynolds, Woodrow W. Stowers, Watson Helvey, Harry N. Foglesong, Dow Davis, Mr. Graham, Jessie Shelton, and Garland L. Updyke.



## LOWER WOLF CREEK SCHOOLS

Before there were any free schools, a building on Edward Wilson's farm was used to answer the purpose of a school where some of the neighbors' children learned their three R's. It was a log structure with one door and one window. The floor was made of split logs, and the benches were rough-hewn logs. The teacher's salary was \$8.00 a month and was paid by the parents of the children. Two teachers in this school were Bob Ashworth and S. G. Shrader.

One day during the quiet and monotonous hum-drum of study, Mr. Shrader fell asleep. As he breathed deeply in peaceful rest, the pupils slipped quietly from their seats and stole from the room via the window. When the master awoke he was startled by the absence of his students. To his pleasant surprise, they were playing outside and school was soon back in progress.

A school commonly known as 'Possum Hollow to the citizens of lower Wolf Creek and officially known as Round Bottom School was built around 1875. The one-room building was located on a hill on land owned by Samuel Gratton Shrader, three and one-half miles east of Rocky Gap. Robert Ashworth was the first teacher and Mabel Akers Pruitt was the last teacher before the building was abandoned. John Helvey, a teacher and young man interested in the ministry, held prayer meetings at night in different homes in the community. Later he entered the full-time ministry.

Around 1915, another one-room Round Bottom School was built on land secured from S. R. Palmer. This one was located in the head of the hollow below the older building.

Farther down Wolf Creek stood the Burton School. Land was purchased from Travis Burton in 1884 for this building site. The school was in operation until 1942. Some teachers in the latter years were: Walter E. Mustard (who is now a Methodist minister), Lucille Shufflebarger, Elizabeth Groseclose, Jean Graves, and Lucy Akers.

## UPPER WOLF CREEK SCHOOLS

There were two schools which served the people in the Upper Wolf Creek area, Red Brush School and Bogle School.

The Red Brush School, originally a log building, became so old and worn that it had to be propped with poles while it was still in use.

In 1935 this log structure burned and a new frame building was erected on a new location. The opening of school was delayed two weeks for the term of 1935-36 because of the incompleteness of the building.

The first teacher in the new building was Ora Grey Umbarger. After 1939 the enrollment became too small to justify the operation of the school and the pupils were then transported to Rocky Gap.

The Bogle School, also a log building, was built about 1862. Little is known concerning this school except that Clay Bogle was once a teacher there. This structure burned and was replaced by a frame building around 1893. The location was on the land of G. C. Fox. Jack Shufflebarger was the carpenter. Two of the earlier teachers were John Smith, a preacher, and Jack Byrd.

This school was discontinued around 1939 at which time the pupils were transported to Rocky Gap.

## **CLEAR FORK VALLEY**

One of the first schools on Clear Fork was built about 1890 at Bishop's Chapel. S. W. Guy was the carpenter who constructed the one-room building.

This school was consolidated with Stowersville School, a four-room building which was located on land given by Frank Steele. In 1942, Stowersville was closed when consolidated with Rocky Gap School.

A log building at Sunny Point on Clear Fork was first used for both school and church activities. In 1920, the School Board erected a frame building near the Sunny Point Church which became known as the Sunny Point School. After the school was discontinued the building was sold and converted into a dwelling house.

## **DRY FORK VALLEY**

The first settlers (colored) in the Dry Fork area came about the year 1880 from Pulaski County. They were:

Wesley Wagner, Jim Wood, and Andy Showalter. In 1887 M. H. Ferguson, A. J. Tynes, and Henry Gray came from Franklin County and settled here.

The necessity of a school soon became evident among these people. In 1891 a school was erected on the property of M. H. Ferguson. The first teacher was Mary Monroe for the term 1891-92. In 1915 this building was replaced by a frame building which remained in use until 1956.

Among other teachers who taught in both of the buildings were: Lizzie Red, Mozella Anderson, Mary Moore, George Mace, Susie Calendar, Roxie Gore, Walter Davenport, and Ardella Price. Ardella Price, who taught in 1906-07, met and married Reuben Ferguson. The two of them still reside in the community and are the oldest citizens in the area.

This school was an integral part of these people's lives until a few short years ago. Each year it became more difficult to find a teacher, and the enrollment decreased from year to year. Since the term 1955-56, the students have been transported to Tazewell County. This brought to a close the operation of Bland County's only colored school.



**Last Colored School in Use in the County.**

## **SCHOOLS IN THE HICKSVILLE COMMUNITY**

During an interview in August, 1960, Mr. and Mrs. William A. Davidson, both in their eighties, revealed the following information concerning early schools in their community.

The earliest known school in this community was a log building which stood in the mouth of a hollow north-west of the present residence of Mr. and Mrs. Davidson. It has been said that the building was originally used as a stillhouse.

More than eighty years ago, Mr. Davidson started to school at the age of five in a log building known as the Pine Hill School. This building stood on or near the same location as that of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Taylor's home.

Typical of the era, heat was provided by a large fireplace in one end of the building. On the front side was the door and beside it was a "double-hung" window, below which was placed a writing desk. On either side of the building was a single row of small-paned glass. The seats were backless, plank benches.

Mr. Davidson's first teacher was Minnie Thorton Bird. Another teacher was Wylie J. Compton.

Mrs. Davidson, the former Miss Nannie Compton, remembers her first school in Pine Hill. In line with the patterns of the time, she started to school at the early age of four. Nannie Ashworth, one of the larger pupils, delighted in singing a lullaby to her. The strong objection to this "baby treatment" made its revelation in the rapid flow of tears and resulted in her going home for good — that is, for that particular term. However, as years passed, Mrs. Davidson gained recognition as being the one from Pine Hill to return as a teacher in the community, teaching in every school from Pine Hill to Hunting Camp.

Other families living in the area whose children attended Pine Hill included the Kinsers, Shufflebargers, Thompsons, Clarks, and Neals.

The Pine Hill School came to an end around 1900, the supposition being that someone burned the building. The next generation went to school at a "New Pine Hill" — a frame building which stood near the site of the old one.

Another log building in the Hicksville Community served for both church and school. This was Pine Grove, built originally for a church but used for day school until a frame building (Hicksville School) was erected across the road, a short distance above the Hicksville post office and country store.



Some progress was evident in the physical environment at Pine Grove. The building was heated by a stove which stood in the center of the room. The wooden benches were built with backs and there were two "double-hung" windows on either side of the building which permitted the entrance of more light. This building was destroyed by fire in March, 1920.

In 1910, land was secured from Tommy J. Neal which became the building site for another school. With consolidation on a slight move, this building was constructed about half way between Pine Hill School and the Hicksville School, thus combining the two in a more centralized location. This structure was used until around 1925, at which time further consolidation took place and the students were sent to Bastian and Rocky Gap Schools.

### **SEDDON DISTRICT SCHOOLS BLAND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

In the days when Bland Court House was called Crab Orchard, school was taught in a room of the house now occupied by Newberry Funeral Home. It has been said that this same room at different times was used as a store, a post office, and an emergency hospital for Confederate soldiers wounded in the Battle of the Cove.

A Primitive Baptist log church, which stood under an oak tree about three-fourth mile east of town (the present Eugene Morehead place) was used as a school before 1861.

A story is told about Squire Jack Muncy, who taught in this church: One day he and his school boys were sawing wood for the school. The wind, blowing violently, sent his hat hurling through the air time after time. Provoked by the repeated interruption, he grabbed the ax and cut his hat into bits. Without a hat, his long hair kept falling in his face. The remedy? Taking his knife from his pocket, he shortened the shreds of hair!

"Mr. Muncy was intellectual and shrewd. He moved among men with his head up, he was polite and kind, and a fine specimen of civilized humanity. He was a good teacher." These were the words of J. T. Taylor.

In the 1880's, Elias Studebaker and sons operated a school in the old Masonic Hall on Jackson Street. They

were from Pennsylvania and the sons, George and Burrell, had a reputation of being very stern teachers.

Records verify that on July 17, 1886, a meeting of the Board of Directors for Bland High School was held in the town of Seddon. Davis Munsey, Superintendent, acted as chairman. Members present were: B. P. Brown, S. W. Williams, George W. Pauley, J. Mahood, and M. Kegley. George W. Penley was elected secretary and treasurer of the Board. On motion of S. W. Williams, it was agreed "to run the High School for the present in the public schoolhouse and Masonic Hall if it could be secured." A committee consisting of S. W. Williams, M. Kegley, and W. N. Mustard was appointed to receive proposals for the purchase of school property.

At a later meeting in the same year, another committee was selected comprising G. W. Penley, M. Kegley and J. N. Johnson, to consider applications and employ teachers. The committee was instructed to give \$600.00 as the maximum amount for operation of the school session which was to run ten months, with the money "arising from Public School District of Seddon private subscriptions, regulating tuition to make it uniform on various grades so as to reach said \$600.00." The committee agreed to employ Rev. Studebaker and son at \$600.00, "reserving the right if said Studebaker's son failed to give satisfaction, to employ an assistant teacher from Bland County."

An old log building which stood just above where Seddon Service Station now stands was the "public schoolhouse" referred to in the above account. After several years this was torn down and a frame building consisting of three rooms was erected on the same location.

Robert M. Saunders, a native of Portsmouth, Virginia, and one of Virginia's most eminent educators, began his teaching career in this school in 1895 at the age of 19.

Mr. Saunders was one of the organizers of the Virginia Education Association, serving in many capacities of that organization as well as in the National Education Association. At one time he was offered the position of State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Virginia but had to decline because of poor health.

In 1909, the school was made a three-year high school. Prior to this time the school was ungraded. The first grad-

uates were Miss Cate Dunn, Miss Virginia Brown, Cynthia Brown (Mrs. A. R. Porterfield) and Ethel Johnston (Mrs. Eugene Davidson).

A new brick building was constructed on a new location (the present site) in 1917.

In the spring of 1922, Lena Thompson, who rode horseback from the "Slide," was the only graduate of Bland High School.

During the session of 1922-23 the school was placed on the accredited list.

To take care of the overflow of students the old Fannon Hotel was used as supplementary classrooms in the late 1920's and early 1930's. The Wagner Auditorium, built in 1937 and named for Dr. J. A. Wagner, contained two classroom annexes and the hotel was no longer used.

In 1939 a frame building housing the Vocational Agriculture and Home Economics Departments was completed. B. M. Wright was the first agricultural teacher and Ruth Crabtree was the first Home Economics instructor.

Serving as principal of Bland High School from 1909 to the present were:

- 1909 — Rev. D. W. Sharpe
- 1910-22 — Haynes Bruce, Miss Naomi Wagner, Edgar Umbarger, and J. T. Dunn, Sr.
- 1922-23 — Mr. DeShazo
- 1923-24 — Mr. Lucas
- 1924-29 — C. E. Bones, Jr.
- 1929-31 — Haynes Bruce
- 1931-38 — J. L. Kincheloe
- 1938-41 — Garland Wygal
- 1941-43 — R. L. Rosenbaum
- 1943-44 — C. L. Clendennon
- 1944-45 — Karl Karcher
- 1945-46 — Miss Virginia Brown
- 1946-52 — Eugene Smith
- 1952-present — Victor R. Gilly

A one-room school for the colored stood on or about the same site as the exhibit building on the Fair Grounds. It is believed the school was in operation from around 1880 to 1903 or '04.

"A rolling stone gathers no moss" cannot be spoken of the Oak Dale Schoolhouse.

The little one-room building first stood on route 42 about three miles east of the courthouse on Mrs. William Bird's land.

In approximately 1915, the structure was moved several miles southward on Walkers Creek on land given by Lafayette Newberry. The Oak Hill Schoolhouse in the community had burned, and the little "Bird Schoolhouse" was moved in the dale below to replace it, the name becoming Oak Dale School. It was used for both school and church until Walkers Creek Church was erected in 1922.

Again the schoolhouse was on the move in 1947, this time to Bland High School where it currently houses the fifth grade.

### **LITTLE CREEK'S - DAVIS SCHOOL**

On the south side of Walkers Mountain in the valley that is watered by Little Walkers Creek, a settlement was made one hundred and ten years ago on homestead land from the government.

Children from several families were first taught in the home of Hannah and Bennett King. Later the Davis School, the first in the valley, was erected. William King and Samuel Davis cut and hand-spiked pine logs fifty feet long for the building. Wyman Harman from the north side of the mountain was the first teacher. Serving as both a school and church, the building was used until 1911, at which time a new school and a church were constructed. The logs from the old building were used in Bopp's Service Station on the Airport Road near Pulaski, and are in an excellent state of preservation today.

### **HUNTING CAMP VALLEY SCHOOLS**

"On September 11, 1873, George W. Martin and James M. Irvin granted, bargained, sold and conveyed to the Trustees of Seddon Magisterial District a certain tract of land situated on Hunting Camp Creek in the County of Bland and containing one-half acre."



This was the first school in this valley; it could have been one of the first three in Bland County. It was used for church purposes also. The building was located on a site which is now a part of the E. J. Meade farm.

Prior to 1900 this school was abandoned and another one was located a mile farther west on the present site of the W. C. Bowles' home.

After a few years the school population declined until the required average could not be attained, and the school was closed. The pupils from this area then went to a school at Bastian (however, it was before the settlement was named Bastian). This building still stands about one mile west of Bastian and is now used as a dwelling. It was known as the Old Mill Schoolhouse.

This was the only school in the valley until 1917. In that year part of the building located on the present W. C. Bowles farm was moved to a lot on the farm of S. D. Suiter, the present site of the home of Mr. and Mrs. G. R. Brown. It was used only one year, 1917-18. Miss Mary Davis was the teacher.

The following year the W. F. White Lumber Company began operation near Suiter. Several families moved into the community, increasing the school population, thereby necessitating a larger school building. A lot was donated by S. D. Suiter and the lumber company constructed a building.

After several years the School Board built a school on the present site of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Kimberlin's home. For some time both buildings were in use.

These two buildings were used until about 1940 when consolidation took place with Bastian School.

## BASTIAN SCHOOL

It was not until the year 1922 or '23 that plans were made to erect a two-room building in the settlement of Bastian. Prior to that time schools up the "Hunting Camp Creek" way accommodated local students.

While the school was under construction classes were held in the Bastian Union Church.

When the Virginia Hardwood Lumber Company located at Bastian in 1927, the increase in school population made the additional classrooms necessary. The lumber company donated the material and W. J. Bruce, who built the original building, contracted the additional rooms.

There were times when the four rooms were inadequate to house the enrollment of students. Then rooms were rented from individual citizens — first one in Mrs. Flora Eagle's home and later a one-room house from Ira S. Kidd.

In 1955 a modern brick building was constructed on a new location at the cost of \$112,215.79. The vacated old building is now the County Maintenance and Repair Shop.

Principals from the two-room structure until the present time are (consecutively): Jim Allen, Porter Stafford, Elizabeth Honaker (Mrs. Williams), Cecil Robinette (Mrs. Guy Bruce), Mabel Atwell (Mrs. Glen Shufflebarger), Miss Nita Hudson, Miss Hattie Stowers, Miss Nita Hudson, and Mrs. Charles Muncy.

## SHARON DISTRICT SCHOOLS CERES COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Mr. Harmon H. Tilson, born in 1820 and the original builder of Tilson's Mill, financed and built the first school in the section four and one-half miles west of Ceres. The father of nine or ten children, Mr. Tilson realized the need for a building to be used solely for instructional purposes. Prior to that time teachers had stayed and taught in the homes.

Neighbors' children as well as his tenants' children were given the opportunity to attend the new school. Its first teacher was I. T. Gollehon from Seven Mile Ford, Smyth County. He fell in love with and married Mary Virginia, Mr. Tilson's oldest daughter. The second teacher, Lilburn Copenhaver from Chilhowie, followed suit by marrying Laura, the second daughter. Mr. Tilson is reported to have declared, "Enough of that. I'll have no more of it — I'll get a woman teacher!" This he did. Mary Kegley, daughter of Mitchell Kegley and sister of Judge Fulton Kegley, came as the first woman teacher, but to no avail: she and Tilson's son, William, were married.

A daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Tilson is Mrs. L. B. Scott, who now lives on Route 42 west of Bland Court House. Mrs. Lena Gollehon Waddell, of Wytheville, is also a descendant of the "original builder" of Tilson's Mill.

1881 was a red letter year for the citizen of Sharon District. Land was purchased for five building sites by the School Trustees. One, bought from Henry T. Lampert, became the site of the Poor Valley School. It was a typical log building which stood beside the road. Among its teachers were R. C. Repass, Grace Tarter, Maude Davis, Ruby Lane, Lola Foglesong, Albert Groseclose, and Margaret Gollehon.

The second site was bought from Henry Groseclose and became Bird Grove School on the Holston River road west of Bethany Church.

A third deed was for land secured from Peter Spangler which became the location of the Gap School. It stood in the gap of a ridge about one-half mile south of Ceres and is now used as a dwelling house by Mrs. M. C. Tibbs.

The fourth site in 1881 was bought from James Crabtree and became Liberty School. It was near the present site of Liberty Church.

The fifth site was purchased from James A. Repass. Further details are not known so no particular school can be identified with this location.

Some of the other known area schools for which dates are unavailable were: Doakes Chapel, Groseclose School or No. 8, Foglesong School, Red Oak School, Bogle School, Dam School, Gravel Hill School.

## SHARON COLLEGE SCHOOL



In the year 1892 Sharon College School was founded and located at Sharon Springs in Sharon District. The buildings, originally erected for hotel and resort purposes, accommodated many wealthy visitors who came to enjoy the healthful climate and gushing spring waters. W. A. Evans, a Tennessean of transient nature, was directly responsible for the organization of the school. He made arrangements with L. M. Newberry, then living in the hotel, to board the students the first year. About twenty students registered at \$10.00 per month. Some thirty or forty pupils attended school there the first year.

Professor Evans is remembered by his students as an extremely intelligent man, stern in his discipline but thorough and helpful in his teaching. He was principal and taught the advanced courses. When a student had completed one of his courses, he or she was well acquainted with the contents and was qualified to teach that subject successfully. His wife taught the elementary work and his niece was instructor in music.

After the first year the Newberry family moved from the hotel and rented the property to Evans. In 1897 the school was closed due to small enrollment and lack of public interest.

The same year, 1897, Mr. J. T. Crabtree, A.M. and A.B. from Roanoke College, assumed principalship and reopened the school with a good enrollment. He continued as the head of the school until 1901 when it was closed permanently.



During the few years that Sharon College School operated, it had a well-balanced program of studies and activities for the day and time. "It is the best thing that has ever happened to Bland County, to have been so short-lived," one former Bland Countain remarked during an interview. Another one said: "My days at Sharon School have been the best days of my life. We were so happy together there and everyone was a friend to everybody else."



Girls at study table in one of the rooms in the girls dorm at Sharon College. Left to right are: Mabel Crabtree, Ella Crabtree, Florence Bogle, and Lucy Dunn.

## CERES HIGH SCHOOL

First known as Ceres Academy, this school has had two separate buildings and locations. The first building was of frame construction and was located on land purchased from Ed Peery at the forks of the road at Ceres. It was financed through sale of stock to school patrons, and charged \$3.00 monthly tuition fee. It began circa 1904 with J. B. McClure as the first principal.

There were four classrooms and an auditorium which doubled as another when necessary. Small upstairs rooms were used as quarters for the teachers and their families. Additional small rooms were used at various times as classrooms, light housekeeping students' quarters, library, and school dental clinic. The last year the school operated, which was 1930, there were five teachers employed to

handle ten grades. The building, bought by R. A. Repass, has been remodeled and is now a dwelling house.

In 1931 a new brick building was built approximately 200 yards south of the old. It cost \$22,000.00 originally and it is located on land bought from W. T. Crabtree. Initially there were six regular classrooms, including the library and one in each end of the temporary auditorium.

Additions include other classrooms, permanent auditorium, Home Economics Department, Vo-Ag building, and gymnasium. There are now ten classrooms, nine teachers handling twelve grades, and an enrollment of 181.

Principals have included J. D. Blankenbeckler, P. A. Scott, Mr. Cobham, Mr. Malcome, Miss Bess Peery, James Graham, C. P. Graham, Mr. Forbes (Faubie), Hagan Graham, Mr. Grim, Mr. Mosley, Mr. Mitchell, B. M. Crabtree (assistant), Mr. Banner, H. W. Reynolds, J. T. W. Mitchell, Garland Wygal, Grover Strong, Harry Morris, Miss Arraga McNeal, and J. M. Thomas.

## ENROLLMENT: BLAND COUNTY SCHOOLS

Year	White	Colored
1871	704	0
1872	1235	0
1873	623	0
1874	1045	28
1875	966	50
1876	966	29
1877	920	33
1878	583	0
1879-80	582	22
1889-90	Not available	
1899-00	1455	0
1909-10	1317	27
1919-20	1288	23
1929-30	1396	22
1939-40	1842	15
1949-50	1482	27
1960-61	1292	0

## SOME COUNTY TEACHERS, CIRCA 1871-1910

Allen, Mrs. Shannon H.	Groseclose, Albert
Ashworth, J. S.	Groseclose, Bittle
Ashworth, John (Ph.D.)	Groseclose, Jessie
Ashworth, Lee (1)	Groseclose, Mabel
Ashworth, Robert	Groseclose, Stella
Ashworth, Rosa	Gross, Jim (1-a)
Baker, a Mr.	Hager, Wylie T.
Baker, Florence	Hamilton, Sena
Bird, George T.	Hanks, D. E.
Bird, Jack	Harless, Martin L.
Bird, Minnie Thorton	Harman, Greeley
Bird, Price	Harman, Newt
Bogle, Clay	Hayes, Mary Jane
Bogle, J. R.	Hedrick, Nannie
Brown, Jim	Helflin, A. R. (Judge and Mrs.)
Browning, J. S. (2)	Helvey, John (1)
Browning, Mont	Helvey, Watson, Sr.
Bruce, Edward (1)	Honaker, John
Bruce, F. L.	Hubble, Mattie
Bruce, Green	Hudson, John
Bruce, Maude	Johnson, Banie
Bruce, W. J.	Kegley, Fulton
Compton, Wylie J.	Kidd, John
Conley, W. D.	Mahood, Carrie
Crabtree, Amanda	Mahood, Rev. James
Crabtree, B. M.	Mahood, Ollie
Davidson, Julia	Mahood, Sallie
Davidson, Maude	McNutt, Maggie
Derrick, a Rev.	Millirons, E. Lee
Dillard, Bill Barker	Mitchell, Dora
Dodd, Carrie	Mitchell, Timothy E.
Dulaney, a Mr.	Mitchell, Victoria
Dunn, J. T., Sr.	Muncy, Hiram J. (father of T. J.)
Fanning, Creed	Muncy, A. J. "Squire"
Fortner, Rose	Muncy, Miss Josie
French, John C.	Muncy, T. J. (4)
Gollehon, I. T.	Muncy, Tom (5)
Gollehon, James (3)	Mustard, J. R.
Gollehon, Lena	Newberry, Emma Evince
Grayson, Mary	Newberry, Minnie
Green, Annie	Penley, E. H.
Green, Bertie	
Green, Emma	

Penley, Rev. George W.  
 Penley, Robert  
 Powers, Johnny (6)  
 Radford, Marion  
 Repass, Frederick  
 Repass, L. D.  
 Repass, Leander  
 Repass, Raymond C.  
 Roberts, Joseph K. (7)  
 Ryburn, a Mr.  
 Saunders, Robert M. (8)  
 Scott, Lillie  
 Shrader, S. G.  
 Sheppard, Lou  
 Shufflebarger, Margaret T.  
 Studebaker, Rev. Elias

Studebaker, George  
 Taylor, W. L.  
 Thompson, Daisy  
 Thorton, Tom  
 Thorn, Hannah  
 Thorn, Josie  
 Tickle, Lozier  
 Umbarger, W. L.  
 Updyke, "Major"  
 Waddle, Edna  
 Wagner, J. A. (9)  
 Walker, Howard  
 Walker, John  
 White, Rev. B. F.  
 Wright, Doc  
 Wright, Emma

- (1) Later became a minister; (1-a) Methodist minister, thought to have DD Degree.
- (2) Later was owner of Pocahontas Coal Mine.
- (3) Lawyer.
- (4) "Step Light Tom," youngest representative in state legislature at 21.
- (5) "Silver-tongued orator," ran for governor.
- (6) A mathematics wizard.
- (7) Later a Ph.D. — taught at Emory and Henry, Vanderbilt University, and University of Virginia; listed in "Who's Who in America."
- (8) Recognized as a great educator in this state.
- (9) Later M.D. and superintendent of schools of Bland County.

#### SCHOOLS IN OPERATION IN 1960-61



**Bland High**





**Rocky Gap Elementary**

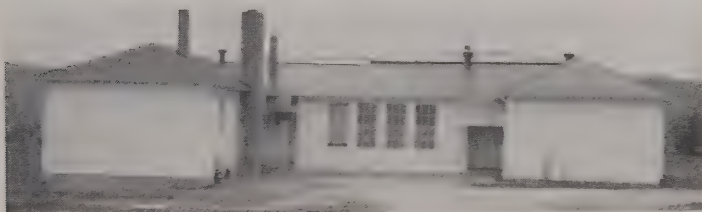


**Rocky Gap High Building**



**Ceres High**

## SCHOOLS IN OPERATION IN 1960-61



**Hollybrook Elementary**



**Bastian Elementary**



**Spur Branch (one room)**



**Mechanicsburg Elementary**

## **BLAND COUNTY SCHOOL DIRECTORY**

**1960 - 61**

### **BLAND HIGH SCHOOL**

Victor R. Gilly, Principal  
 Ralph Reynolds  
 Mrs. Robt. S. Bane  
 R. Dow Davis  
 Claude S. Stowers  
 S. Francis Groseclose  
 Mrs. Sam L. Hardy  
 Miss Mary Greever  
 Mrs. J. T. Dunn, Sr.  
 Mrs. Billy Newberry

### **Elementary:**

Mrs. H. C. Groseclose  
 Mrs. W. C. Burton  
 Miss Marjorie Blankenship  
 Mrs. Woodrow Harman  
 Miss Georgie Mustard  
 Miss Myrtle Stuart  
 Miss Ethel Billips

### **ROCKY GAP HIGH SCHOOL**

Garland L. Updyke,  
 Principal  
 Mahlon K. Rudy  
 Mrs. L. H. Sands  
 Earle Crabtree  
 Miss Faye Kidd  
 Mrs. Irvin Gordon  
 Mrs. John H. Pruett  
 Teddy Dixon  
 Richard Cooley

### **Elementary:**

Mrs. Raymond Stowers  
 Mrs. Bill Walters  
 Miss Hazel Stowers  
 Mrs. Fred Simpkins  
 Mrs. John Gregory  
 Mrs. R. T. Newton  
 Mrs. Ralph Kidd

### **CERES HIGH SCHOOL**

J. M. Thomas, Principal  
 Sidney Harvey  
 Mrs. Bane Crabtree  
 Mrs. Otho Cassell  
 Otho Cassell

### **Elementary:**

Mrs. P. C. Kegley  
 Mrs. Charles Atwell  
 Mrs. Bruce Cassell  
 Mrs. J. M. Thomas

**BASTIAN ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL**

Mrs. Charles P. Muncy,  
Principal  
Mrs. G. R. Brown  
Mrs. Everett Umbarger  
Mrs. Garland Updyke

**MECHANICSBURG  
ELEMENTARY**

Harry S. Bird, Principal  
Mrs. Harry S. Bird  
Mrs. J. S. Penley

**BLAND COUNTY  
SCHOOL BOARD**

James O. Morehead,  
Superintendent  
L. D. Morehead,  
Chairman  
Vance Waddle  
George Peery  
Raymond Stowers  
Mrs. Edgar Shannon,  
Secretary

**HOLLY BROOK  
ELEMENTARY**

Mrs. Garland Mustard,  
Principal  
Mrs. Luther Ramsey  
Mrs. Fayette Faulkner

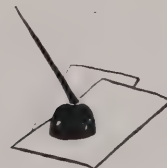
**SPUR BRANCH**

(One Room)

Mrs. Frank R. Wagner

**BLAND COUNTY  
SCHOOL ELECTORAL  
BOARD**

S. Paul Bernard  
Paul Crabtree  
M. L. Greever





## BLAND COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD



**Left to Right: Vance Waddle, Raymond F. Stowers, James O. Morehead, L. D. Morehead and George H. Peery.**

Representing Seddon Magisterial District, Vance Waddle was appointed to the School Board in June, 1957. Mr. Waddle was educated in the schools of Bland County and Emory and Henry College. Through his cooperative efforts and profound interest in the children of Bland County, Mr. Waddle was largely responsible for developments and approval for the construction of additions to Bland High School. He is presently engaged in farming.

Raymond F. Stowers, representing Rocky Gap District, was appointed to the Board in July, 1950. He attended the public schools in Bluefield, W. Va., and Rocky Gap and was graduated from Bland High School. Mr. Stowers attended Concord College and the University of Virginia. His dedication and sincerity of purpose to his responsibility is evidenced by his efforts in obtaining at Rocky Gap one of the most modern school plants in this section. Recognizing the importance and necessity of an education for the children of Bland County, Mr. Stowers shows no hesitancy in stating his position. Above all he recognizes teaching as a profession and teachers as professional people. Mr. Stowers is a farmer.

James O. Morehead has been Superintendent and Clerk since 1953.

Lake D. Morehead, born in Montgomery County, moved to Bland County with his parents when but a small boy, and was educated in the public schools of Bland

County. He was appointed to the School Board of Bland County in 1940 and has served as Chairman of the Board since 1941. His tenure of office as a member of the School Board and particularly as Chairman represents the longest continuous service of any member of the current Board. Mr. Morehead's ardent interest in education and his unselfish desire to provide educational opportunities and facilities for all the children in Bland County are well demonstrated by the progress of Bland County Schools since he became a member of the Board. He represents Mechanicsburg Magisterial District. He, along with his son, Rex, is engaged in dairy farming.

George H. Perry is no doubt one of the most illustrious men in Bland County. He was educated in the public schools of Tazewell County at Burkes Garden, the place of his birth. He attended Roanoke College after graduation from high school. In 1919 Mr. Perry moved to his mother's farm at Ceres where he has resided since. He was appointed a member of the Bland County School Board in 1942 and has represented Sharon District to the present time. He has served his school district faithfully during the last two decades and through his enthusiastic efforts and support of public education has become a public figure throughout the state.

In 1927 Mr. Perry grew the first crop of burley tobacco in Bland County. In 1929 he changed his farming operation to dairying and also became the first producer of grade "A" milk. He assisted in organizing the Southwest Virginia Agriculture Association in 1935; was elected a director of the Federal Land Bank of Bland County in 1936; served as the first president of the Virginia Burley Tobacco Growers Association; is a member of the Board of Directors of the Southwest Fertilizer Corporation, and in 1952 was elected District Governor of Ruritan National for Southwest Virginia and was responsible for organizing ten Ruritan Clubs in Southwest Virginia.

Mr. Perry is an avid traveler and is always willing to go anywhere or anytime when the welfare of his people or his community is involved. He makes acquaintances easily and has a host of friends throughout the State. Mr. Perry and his son, George, operate a dairy farm at Ceres.



## CHAPTER X

### THE BANKS OF BLAND COUNTY



The first bank in Bland County was the Bank of Bland County. Mr. C. L. King of Pearisburg, Virginia, in 1903, with the cooperation of interested citizens, organized the present Bank of Bland County which has operated in continuous service since that date. Harman Newberry was elected the first president and C. P. Muncy, Sr., was elected as the first cashier. The following were elected as Directors: F. C. Kegley, Harman Newberry, J. C. Honaker, A. L. Newberry, M. S. Bruce, J. N. Walker, J. D. Honaker, E. D. Mustard, J. A. Wagner, R. C. Repass, A. R. Porterfield, C. M. Bane, G. W. Buchanan, J. C. Mustard, W. A. Newberry, J. G. Muncy, J. R. Stafford, W. S. Dunn, Mrs. Mary J. Kegley and H. B. Shufflebarger.

Harman Newberry served as president of the bank until 1909, at which time he was succeeded by Fulton Kegley; J. C. Honaker served as vice president; John H. Greever, cashier, and R. W. Wylie, assistant cashier. Mr. Wylie resigned in July, 1910, and accepted a position with a bank in Roanoke. In 1910, John H. Greever resigned as cashier and was replaced by J. R. Honaker with W. O. Greever as assistant cashier. In 1913, W. O. Greever was made cashier and served in that capacity until 1916, at which time G. W. Buchanan was elected as cashier.



From the time of the organization of the Bank of Bland in 1903 to February, 1916, offices were maintained in the Court House in what is now the Treasurer's Office. In 1916 a committee was appointed and thus made purchase of the land upon which the present Bank of Bland County is located. The purchase price was \$100.00. Construction bids were advertised and invited with the low bid of \$3,385.00 submitted by B. F. Snead, which was accepted.

In May, 1920, W. A. Newberry was elected vice president and in August of the same year the first posting ledger was purchased. In the same year a furnace was installed and two ventilators placed in the ceiling for the purpose of heating the upstairs rooms which are now being used by Dr. G. B. Kegley in his practice of medicine. In May, 1925, S. J. Buchanan was elected assistant cashier and served until August, at which time he, along with G. W. Buchanan, resigned. John R. Stafford was elected cashier in August, 1925, replacing G. W. Buchanan and served faithfully and efficiently as cashier until his death in January, 1959. In March of 1927, W. A. Newberry was elected president and A. L. Newberry vice president. H. B. Shufflebarger was made assistant cashier. In April, 1930, W. S. Dunn was appointed attorney for the bank and has served in that capacity since that date.

In March, 1933, the Bank of Rocky Gap and the Bank of Mechanicsburg merged with the Bank of Bland County. The new, consolidated Bank of Bland elected the following officers: President, W. A. Newberry; Vice President, A. L. Newberry, Ward Songer and D. E. Conley. The Directors were as follows: W. A. Newberry, A. L. Newberry, H. B. Shufflebarger, Ward Songer, G. T. Bird, G. H. Mustard, W. S. Dunn, Mary J. Kegley, J. M. Tuggle, D. E. Conley and J. R. Stafford, Cashier. J. H. Lambert was elected assistant cashier. In 1934, G. H. Mustard was elected as assistant cashier, and in the same year Pierce C. Kegley replaced Mrs. Kegley as a member of the Board of Directors. Since 1934, the following from time to time have served as members of the Board of Directors: A. W. Newberry, M. H. Bowen, Sr., G. B. Kegley, J. W. Thompson, J. J. Davidson, J. H. Lambert, A. G. Updyke, and W. Paul Blessing. The Bank of Bland County first became a State Depository in 1937.

In 1950 and currently serving in that capacity, P. C. Kegley was elected president. In January, 1959, E. S. Bailey, employed as assistant cashier in July, 1958, was elected cashier to replace John R. Stafford, deceased. Donald Lee Dunn served as assistant cashier from 1950 until January, 1958.

The present officials and employees of the Bank of Bland County are: President, P. C. Kegley; Cashier, E. S. Bailey. P. S. Curry, J. W. Thompson, A. G. Updyke and W. P. Blessing are the current Board of Directors. Other employees are B. C. Atwell, Elizabeth Tuggle, Kenneth May, Ellen Gabbert and Ann Hubble. C. P. Richardson is the present janitor.

### BANK OF MECHANICSBURG

The Bank of Mechanicsburg was organized and granted a charter in June, 1915. The first president was N. T. Shumate. Ward Songer was elected the first vice president and T. H. McNeil, cashier. The bank began operation in a rented building and with a capital of \$12,000. Five members constituted the first board of directors. In 1918 the number was increased to seven. The following men served as members of the board of directors: N. T. Shumate, Ward Songer, J. Hoge Hetherington, S. C. Chumbley, L. F. Morehead, J. S. Ashworth, S. N. Penley, G. H. Mustard, and C. A. Mitchell. In December, 1919, Ward Songer was elected president, replacing N. T. Shumate who liquidated his stock. Also in 1919 George T. Bird was elected vice president.

T. H. McNeil served as cashier of the Bank of Mechanicsburg from the time it was organized until September, 1920, when he resigned and was replaced by John R. Stafford. Miss Ethel Bane served for a brief time as assistant cashier.

In July, 1925, a new building was contracted for at a cost of \$4,425. Upon the resignation of John R. Stafford as cashier in 1926, G. H. Mustard was elected cashier. Miss Kent, of Dublin, was employed to assist Mr. Mustard during a short period of orientation. The bank continued to operate until March, 1933, at which time it was consolidated with the Bank of Bland County. At the time of

liquidation of the Bank of Mechanicsburg, the capital was listed at \$12,000, surplus of \$12,000, and undivided profits of \$2,000.

### THE BANK OF ROCKY GAP



The youngest of the banks in Bland County and also the shortest-lived bank was the Bank of Rocky Gap. The formation and organization of this bank was necessitated by the conditions of roads and the inaccessibility of other banking facilities. On October 17, 1922, forty-three leading citizens of the Rocky Gap community assembled for the purpose of organizing a bank. They represented 236 of the 250 shares necessary for the capital of \$25,000 which was the amount set as a goal. Dr. F. D. Kelley, a former cashier of the Bank of Narrows, who assisted in the organization of the Bank of Rocky Gap, was elected the first cashier. The new bank was named the "Bank of Rocky Gap." J. M. Tuggle was elected president. J. J. Davidson and D. E. Conley were elected vice presidents. D. E. Conley agreed to give the land, or its equivalent, for the construction of the building. A room of temporary nature was constructed at the side of the D. E. Conley Store for use as a bank until one of permanent nature could be constructed. Dr. Kelly, cashier, applied for permission to operate the bank, and the Bank of Rocky Gap was open for business on January 8, 1923.

The bank began operation with a capital of \$21,890, already subscribed and by March 16th all stock subscriptions had been paid in full. The following men served as directors during the bank's existence: B. A. Smith, J. H. Lambert, C. F. Stowers, F. D. Kelley, J. M. Tuggle, J. J.

Davidson, D. E. Conley, J. C. Tuggle, J. H. Davidson, J. C. Weddle, R. F. Compton, M. A. Thompson, E. T. Lambert, W. D. Tuggle, W. A. Beamer, C. L. Morehead, J. B. Pulliam and W. A. Davidson.

With the resignation of Dr. Kelley in April, 1924, J. H. Lambert was elected cashier and W. A. Beamer was elected assistant cashier. In 1926, Edna Lambert was elected assistant cashier. Serving as a husband-wife team, Mr. and Mrs. Lambert continued as cashier and assistant cashier, respectively, until the bank was merged with the Bank of Bland County in 1933.

An attempt was made in 1927 to rob the bank. Although no money was taken, the safe's door was damaged to the extent that a replacement became necessary.

Realizing the dire need of a new building and adequate facilities, specifications were drawn by Sheffey and Gary, Architects, and the contract was let to J. L. Warren for the construction of the new bank building. On March 3, 1930, the new building was completed and open for business.

When the Bank of Rocky Gap merged with the Bank of Bland, the total assets and liabilities were \$121,821.73 as compared with \$42,615.19 at the time the bank was organized. The capital, at the time of liquidation, was still \$25,000, with a surplus of \$13,000 and undivided profits amounting to \$2,394.95.

When the banks merged in 1933 a number of the depositors moved their accounts to Bluefield, West Virginia, and thus were lost to our county bank. Both the Bank of Mechanicsburg and the Bank of Rocky Gap were able to liquidate their collections at the time of merging and pay their stockholders better than par for their stock while still holding proportionate shares in the new consolidated Bank of Bland County.



## EULOGY TO JOHN R. STAFFORD



One of the outstanding men in Bland County during the past few years was John R. Stafford, beloved banker in the county for thirty-nine years. He served the Bank of Mechanicsburg for five years as cashier before coming to Bland to the county bank where he served for thirty-four years as cashier and executive vice-president until his death on January 4, 1959.

Born in Mechanicsburg on May 29, 1891, Mr. Stafford lived his life out in Bland County serving his county and "his people". He attended Piedmont Business College in Lynchburg, after which he served his country in World War I, being stationed at Camp Lee, Virginia.

Mr. Stafford was known and loved by everyone with whom he came in contact. People from all walks of life depended on John for advice and assistance. Wherever he happened to be — at home, at the bank, or just on the street — was the place where he was called upon for help and he never failed to lend a helping hand. A fitting tribute to him is that he lived to help others.

Many and varied were the civic duties Mr. Stafford performed. Among these, he was a charter member of Bland County Kiwanis Club, acting as president and treasurer during his membership; a past Worshipful Master of Bland Masonic Lodge 206; Potentate of Kazim Temple of the Shrine; a member of the Miller T. Burton Post 20, American Legion, and its first commander; treasurer and advisor of the Bland County Chapter of American Red Cross; and treasurer of the Virginia Society for Crippled Children for the county.

John married Virginia O'Rourke of Newport News, Virginia, in 1935. Mrs. Stafford and their three sons, John R., Jr., Stuart O., and William survive him.

## HISTORY OF POSTAL SERVICE IN BLAND COUNTY

The first Post Office in what is now Bland County was established at Mechanicsburg on March 28, 1837 while still a part of Giles County. Daniel Hoge served as the first postmaster.

It would be almost impossible to list every post office that was established in the county at one time or another. Some were set up and discontinued in a year or less. The Post Office Department would then in a year or so re-establish them. In the case of Hollybrook, the Post Office was discontinued twice between 1877 and 1879, once for a total of three months.

We can only estimate the number of offices that have at one time or another been established in the county. A conservative guess would put it between thirty and forty. Space will not permit the name of everyone who served as postmaster at the various offices throughout the county. There were many whose descendants still live in the county.

The Bland Post Office was established June 20, 1851. It was known as Crab Orchard at that time and was changed to Bland Court House some time between that date and July, 1868. John C. Shannon was appointed the first postmaster. Adam C. Waggoner, father of the late Dr. Jake, was postmaster from 1866 to 1868. Augustus W. Shewey, Mitchell Kegley, Sidney J. Banks, Estell D. Mustard and R. C. Green were some others who served as postmaster in the late 1800's.

In the early 1900's Lemuel Andrews, Zebulon L. Painter and Bascom N. Mustard served in that order until 1934, when Edgar F. Shannon, grandson of the first postmaster, received the appointment. He served until 1947 when he resigned and was succeeded by the present postmaster, Mrs. B. M. Wright.

R. C. Green, who believed in giving service to his patrons, had a slot cut in the front door of his home. People could drop mail into it and he would carry it on to the office for dispatching.

The Ceres office was established March 31, 1881, and Henry C. Groseclose was the first postmaster. Raymond C. Repass, Mrs. Elizabeth M. Groseclose, Fayette M. Repass and Lavina V. Groseclose were some others who served in

the 1800's. Mrs. Ray Foglesong serves this office now as postmaster.

Rocky Gap Post Office was established January 29, 1866, with Elias Stowers appointed as the first postmaster. James D. Honaker, John M. Tuggle, Rufus Stowers, James C. Tuggle, Jacob H. Sands and John Burton served in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Mrs. Nannie R. Tiller is the present postmaster.

Mechanicsburg, already mentioned, was established March 28, 1937. After Daniel Hoge came George G. Hoge, Lee C. Brown, Thomas Jackson, Mrs. Virginia Thornton, Isaac J. Davis, Jennie Woodyard, Hiram Rider, Harvey R. Mustard, John W. Stafford, Fred J. Penley, and Albert Z. Updyke. All served as postmasters in the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century. John C. Stafford is the present postmaster.

The Crandon office was established July 26, 1897, with Charles B. Wohlford serving as the first postmaster. Orrin K. Phlegar, Grover C. Hamilton, Charles L. Mustard, Eunice Mitchell, and Charles M. Bane also served in the early part of the century. Cleo Brookman is currently serving as postmaster.

Long Spur's first office was established June 5, 1891. Henry Davis was the first postmaster. He was followed by Robert H. Kitts who served for many years. Estle C. Hamblin is postmaster at the present time.

Bastian was the last office to be established in the county. Not until June 5, 1915 was Arista T. Harmon appointed the first postmaster. James H. Harmon and Mrs. Flora L. Eagle followed him as postmasters in the 1920's. Mrs. Cecil Bruce and Mrs. Jessie Johnson each served as postmaster for a time. On November 1, 1949, Carlton Bruce Shufflebarger was appointed and continues to serve in the capacity of postmaster. Improvement in transportation facilities and the establishing of Rural Free Delivery caused the discontinuance of the many small offices in the county. Mahoney, Sharon Springs, Tilson Mill, and Effna were closed and the Ceres office took over the mail formerly handled by those offices.

Hollybrook, Helvey and Kimberling were closed and the Crandon office took over the mail for that part of the county.

Rocky Gap took over from the offices of Byron, Hicksville, and Stowersville and in 1960 the Cove Creek office was closed and the mail sent to Rocky Gap. Miss Bert Virginia Stowers was postmaster at Cove Creek at the time the office was discontinued.

Route 1 of the Rural Free Delivery was established at Bland May 15, 1905. Hubert L. Suiter was the first regular carrier for this route. Charles Grayson, Brook Williams, Gilbert R. Repass, Brown Hubble, and Hilary Muncy were the next regular carriers in that order. Hilary Muncy serves this route now.

Route 2 was established June 1, 1905, with James G. (Gordie) Sifford the first regular carrier. He served for 31 years. Upon his retirement, Zebulon L. Painter became the regular carrier and continues to serve on that route.

Route 1 at Ceres was established February 1, 1904. Henry E. Hubble was the first regular carrier on this route. Robert R. Hubble, William A. Beagle, Charles B. Fogle-song, Adam H. Cooper, Henry H. Hubble, and Joseph E. Young also served as either regular or substitute carrier. Route 1 was discontinued August 31, 1919.

Route 2 was started August 15, 1904. Samuel E. Kegley was the first regular carrier and he held the post for thirty years. Charles W. Compton, C. Alfred Crabtree, Roy G. Cassell and William K. Compton also served on Route 2 before it was discontinued November 30, 1934.

Route 1 was re-established March 24, 1956. Marvin H. Neel serves this route at the present time. He was formerly postmaster for twenty-eight years at Ceres before transferring to the rural route.

Route 1 at Crandon was established February 1, 1908. Charles B. Wohlford was the first regular carrier. William B. Morehead, John W. Stafford, Henry E. Newberry and William B. Morehead also served as substitute or temporary carriers. This route was discontinued April 30, 1931.

Route 1 at Bastian was established February 23, 1957. It is served by George W. Harless, who formerly was the carrier at Rocky Gap before that route was discontinued.

Great strides have been made since 1953 in the postal building program which was carried on under commercial



lease basis. During this time Bland dedicated a new office building provided by Bland Masonic Lodge on May 18, 1957. On this occasion special guests included Honorable W. Pat Jennings, Congressman from the Ninth District of Virginia; G. C. Woolridge, Field Service Officer of the Post Office Department, and our own Senator D. Woodrow Bird. On March 15, 1958, Bastian held dedication ceremonies at their new brick and cinderblock building built by D. N. Shufflebarger and leased to the Post Office Department. Honorable W. Pat Jennings was guest speaker on this occasion. A. D. Stover, District Operations Manager, was a speaker and distinguished guest. Very soon after the Bastian office was moved, Rocky Gap also moved into new quarters provided by the Masonic Lodge of Rocky Gap. All of these offices were equipped with adequate and modern government-owned equipment.



**Route I — Rural Free Delivery**  
**Hubert Suiter — Mail Carrier**

## CHAPTER XI

### 1861 — BLAND COUNTY ROADS — 1961

The first settlers to come to what is now Bland County used creek beds for roads and carried with them the bare necessities required to sustain life. They rode their horses across the mountains and followed paths made by the buffalo and other wild animals. These paths were used frequently in order to take the "short cuts" between river and creek beds. The grades were so steep that quite often the rider would have to walk and lead his horse. Some of these paths continued to be used until the automobile came into use. A few of these paths are evident today. The first wagon roads were built about 1830. The Raleigh-Grayson Turnpike that ran from Raleigh County to Grayson County connected this area with the river boats at Hinton and this route was used by some of our settlers in their westward migration to Kansas during the wheat boom between 1870 and 1880. The Raleigh-Grayson Turnpike, which was built between 1830 and 1840, served as a connection with the Fincastle and Cumberland Turnpike in Mercer County, West Virginia, at a point called the "Cross Roads," which is located four miles east of the present town of Bluefield, West Virginia. This road was used in traveling from the coal fields to Rocky Gap, Hicksville, Bland, and Wytheville and was built some time between 1840 and 1850.

The Tazewell Court House and Fancy Gap Turnpike was chartered by the State Legislature in 1848 and constructed just before 1852. This turnpike ran from Tazewell to Burke's Garden, Sharon Springs nad across Walkers Mountain to Wytheville, crossing the Holston Turnpike at Sharon Springs. This road was used extensively by the people of Tazewell County while traveling to and from Wytheville, which was the railroad center of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad. This railroad was completed in 1855 and later extended to Bluefield, West Virginia, and Pocahontas, Virginia, in 1883. The road between Sharon Springs and the top of Walkers Mountain is used at the present time.

The Holston Turnpike, running east and west through Bland County, was used during the Civil War by the

farmers in hauling salt from the salt mines at Saltville. Our present Blue Grass Trail, Route 42, replaced the original Holston Turnpike. The railroad centers of Dublin, Wytheville, and later Narrows, Bluefield and Pocahontas served as the "hub" around which the main wagon roads were constructed.

In 1909 the construction of the railroad leading from Narrows to Rocky Gap and on to Bastian and Suiter caused a network of roads leading to Bastian, which was the shipping center for Bland County. Cattle, hogs and sheep were driven on foot to Bastian for shipping to the distant markets. Prior to 1900 and the extension of the railroads to this area, horses, mules and other livestock were driven down Clear Fork, Wolk Creek, Poplar Hill and as far as New Market, Virginia, for marketing.

Although the roads at that time were steep and poorly graded, they were passable for wagons and buggies with the exception of crossing creeks when the waters were high, which occurred quite often. In this case the journey could be continued by following the mountain tops or going through some farmer's field.

The first wagon bridge built in Bland County was the Deer Hollow Ford Bridge near Rocky Gap about 1900 and located on the old Raleigh-Grayson Turnpike. Until about 1920 practically all the roads in Bland County were constructed and maintained by the County Board of Supervisors. When a new road was proposed, the Supervisors would appoint five "viewers" or five "free holders" to recommend the necessary change. After the recommendation was made, the County Court would build the road, using local labor, in order that the farmers could "work out" the property tax that they owed the county.

About 1920 the State Department of Highways assumed responsibility of assisting in the building of a few roads and the necessary fences, provided the county would follow "certain specifications".

Wolf Creek and Walkers Creek went on rampages in 1876, 1916, and again in 1957 to the extent that traffic was stranded for some time.

Through the sale of bonds and use of convict labor, the Lakes-to-Florida Highway was built in 1924. Approximately thirty miles of this road extends through Bland

County. It is difficult for us to believe that all of this work was done by hand, using picks and shovels and dump wagons drawn by two large mules. There were 100 convicts assigned to this work and it was a familiar sight to see them walk to and from camp which was located near Bland. In 1926 a "steam shovel" was acquired and used to dump the dirt and rocks into the mule-drawn carts.

Prior to 1930 there were no macadamized (hard top) roads in Bland County. Mr. Long, in 1930-31, contracted to hard surface the first nine miles from Bland to the top of Walkers Mountain, and from Bland to the top of East River Mountain in 1931. This was the first "all weather" road ever constructed in Bland County. The Moore Brothers chartered a bus line from Wytheville to Bluefield after the completion of this road.

The Blue Grass Trail Association was organized to assist in obtaining Route 42, which began at New Castle in Craig County and entered Bland County at White Gate. This route was the same as the original Holston Turnpike and extended to Bland, Ceres, and on to Saltville in Smyth County.

Route 61, beginning at Narrows and extending up the valley to Tazewell, was constructed on the original railroad bed through lower Wolk Creek. This road, too, was built with prison labor and hard surfaced at the time of construction.



Wagon Bridge at Rocky Gap, Virginia



## HISTORY OF THE NEW RIVER-HOLSTON AND WESTERN RAILROAD COMPANY



During the year of 1903 the town of Narrows wanted some kind of industry and persuaded Lees & McVitty of Salem, Virginia, to build a tannery there to employ the surplus labor. Tan bark from white oak and hemlock trees was used to tan leather. This industry was second in size to the lumber operation in Giles and Bland Counties, so the tannery built three miles of railroad up Wolf Creek to haul tan bark to the tannery.

Then in 1907 and 1908, the Mermian Lumber Company came to a place called Talmash and bought all the timber holdings in that area. They also bought what was known as the Mermian Farm near Chapel, Virginia, and built seven miles of railroad for their operation. Other lumber interests extended this railroad to First Ford in Giles County.

In 1912 the New River, Holston and Western Railroad Company built the railroad to Rocky Gap, Virginia. This came as the result of the purchase of what was known as the Buck Horn Timber by the W. M. Ritter Lumber Company. Then Mr. W. E. Mingea, Jr., of Abingdon, Virginia, who owned all the big survey in Bland County, decided to build the railroad to Suiter, Virginia, for the lumber and bark industry and this was done in 1914. Mr. F. E. Bastian was made general manager of the New River, Holston and Western Company. The town of Bastian was called Parkersburg but to avoid confusion with other towns in Virginia, it was changed to Bastian in honor of Mr. F. E. Bastian.

About the year 1919 the Norfolk and Western Railroad Company bought the railroad and changed the name to Norfolk and Western Railroad Company. This company furnished about 23 per cent of the cost of construction from Rocky Gap to Suiter, Virginia.

The stations beginning at Narrows, Virginia, in their respective order were: Talmash, Penvir, Bridge No. 2, First Ford, Chappel, Niday, Round Bottom, Rocky Gap, Novis (which is now South Gap), Hicksville, Bastian, and Suiter. The only agency established was at Bastian, Virginia, with Mr. G. T. Thompson as the first agent, followed by Mr. Arch Munsey, Mr. Dave Shufflebarger, Mr. B. A. McClaugherty, and Mrs. C. B. Shufflebarger. During this period, four hundred and twelve carloads of livestock were shipped to market.

The first official train was run to Suiter in August, 1914, and the railroad was discontinued in 1946.



Clearing of land for the New River-Holston and Western Railroad Company.



## CHAPTER XII

### EARLY TELEPHONES IN BLAND COUNTY

In 1897, Gordon Wohlford, a merchant at Crandon, built a telephone line extending from his store at Crandon to Bob Bailey's in Bluefield, West Virginia. Subscribers along the line were Pendleton Burton, Wilderness Road; Mrs. Mattie Davidson, Rocky Gap; Jim Honaker, Rocky Gap; and Max Whittier, Rocky Gap. (The above information was submitted by Mr. L. D. Morehead and Mrs. Ellis Newberry. Mrs. Newberry is a granddaughter of Mr. Gordon Wohlford.)



**Picture of log cabin of George Peery Place where first telephone of Bland County was installed.**

The first satisfactory results of telephone communication in America were realized in 1877 when Alexander Graham Bell completed and put into practical use a telephone line between Salem and Boston, Massachusetts. Three years later (1880) the use of telephone communication had become widespread, at which time 148 telephone companies and private concerns operated 34,308 miles of lines. The history of this new media of communication has been one of continual growth and expansion.

The advent of telephone communication in Bland County actually goes back to 1893 when two gentlemen from Burkes Garden visited the World's Fair in Chicago and brought back two phones. The two phones were set up between a store and a house in Burkes Garden and caused much excitement. This resulted in the organiza-



tion of a telephone system in that Tazewell County community.

During the following year (1894), Mr. A. E. Peery, who had farms in Burkes Garden and Ceres, constructed a private line from his home in Burkes Garden to his farm four miles southwest to Ceres on what is now the George Peery place. This involved building a line of 14 miles across two mountains, thus establishing the first telephone line in Bland County.\*

The new telephone line from Burkes Garden ran within a hundred feet of the Ceres Store owned by Wm. Walter Groseclose. Mr. Groseclose soon became interested in the telephone and during the following year (1895) he connected to the Peery line and put phones in his home and store. This soon became a multi-party line when Mr. Joe Meek of Burkes Garden, who owned a mill in Ceres, made connections between those two points. Shortly after that a phone line was extended from Meek's Mill to Sharon College by Professor J. T. Crabtree.

The first lines were fastened to trees but an adequate service was reported. On one occasion soon after the connection between Burkes Garden and Ceres, Mr. Walter Groseclose called Mr. A. E. Peery and became quite excited when he could hear a clock striking in the Peery home nearly 12 miles away.

In the late fall of 1895, soon after the Rural Retreat Telephone System was started, a line was built between Ceres and Rural Retreat with expenses being shared by the two communities. Dr. A. B. Greiner, of Rural Retreat, recalls that on a trip to Beartown in 1896 he stopped at Goodman Store in Burkes Garden and telephoned to Rural Retreat, a remarkable feat for that day!

However, it was not long before calls could be placed between Marion, Ceres, Wytheville, Burkes Garden, and Tazewell without charge, as all five companies interchanged calls one with the other.

In 1898 the line in Ceres was extended from the log cabin on the Peery farm to the office of Dr. Holmes in Chatham Hill. Dr. Holmes served the Ceres community at that time.

\*See picture of the log house in which the first phone was located.

Interest in forming a telephone system in Ceres began to grow with marked enthusiasm, and a switchboard was established in the Stuart Foglesong home. Later the switchboard was moved to the Joe Meek home, then to the Post Office building, and eventually to the Henry Groseclose home.

In 1909 interest had increased to the point that further developments were necessary. It was at this time that the present Mutual Telephone Company was formed. About 150 members paid \$18 per phone for stock in the company in order to purchase land and erect a switchboard office. One and one-half acres was purchased from Mr. Charlie Crabtree and the present switchboard location was completed in 1910. The agreement was also made that each member would pay the switchboard operator \$1.50 per year. Mr. Mezappa (Zap) Tibbs was operator at that time and served the mutual company with distinction and fidelity for 29 years.\*

The Mutual Telephone Company of Ceres functioned in the community for 51 years. Recently the Intermountain Telephone Company was invited to take over the operation of the company and a new building has been erected to take care of the service.

A short time after telephone communication came to Ceres, the Bland community followed with its system. The first known telephone line in Bland was erected between Bland and Wytheville by Mr. Arthur Porterfield and Judge Sam Williams, partners in a law firm. This line was known as the "Porterfield Line."

In 1902 a schoolmasters' debate was held at the law office of Arthur Porterfield at Bland. The subject of the debate was: "The World Has Passed its Zenith." George Penley, an eminent scholar and teacher, was debating the negative side, which was one of his characteristics, so we are told. In his ensuing arguments, he stated: "I have been told that there is a contraption hanging in there on the wall that you can talk all the way to Wytheville on. I predict that some day men will be talking all the way around the world without the use of connecting wires." The final decision was awarded to the team defending the question of the debate. "A prophet has no honor in his own country!"

\*See picture of Mr. Tibbs.

Around the turn of the century, or afterward, a mutual telephone system was organized at Bland. The first operator was Parrish Chandler. In 1934, after the mutual system had all but faltered, the line was taken over by Intermountain Telephone Company and a modern system was installed that is now in use.

In 1910, another telephone system was started at Effna, about seven miles northeast of Ceres on Route 42, with a small membership. In connection with this system, a line was erected from Wytheville by L. D. Calfee, of Wytheville, and extended to Effna and Tazewell. This was probably known as the "Bob Pierce Line." The Effna system was also connected to the mutual system at Ceres.

The popular use of telephone communication also extended to the eastern end of the county. Gordon Wohlford of Crandon had a line built from his store to Bluefield, West Virginia, in the year 1897. Later, in 1924, Crandon founded a mutual company with a small membership. Mechanicsburg soon followed with a mutual system, but when the modern system came to Bland these mutual systems were dissolved and were serviced by the Intermountain system. The communication systems of Bastian and Rocky Gap were closely connected with the Norfolk and Western Railway system until the railroad was abandoned. After that the Bastian community was serviced by Intermountain Telephone Company; and recently, Rocky Gap has been serviced by the General Telephone Company of Bluefield. Hollybrook is now also served by the General Telephone Company.

Thus, from the installation of a single phone on the Peery farm in Ceres in 1894, the phone systems of Bland County have increased to cover most of the county. In addition to this are the many private family phones and the phone system of the forestry service. With the installation of a dial system in Ceres in the near future, a network of dial phones will cover the county.

## NEWSPAPERS IN BLAND COUNTY (1872-1961)

An integral part of our society in Bland County has been the newspapers.

The first publication, a weekly edition, was the Religious Herald which was published during the period be-

tween 1872 and 1876. This was a non-sectarian paper and was published by Rev. William Hicks and W. W. Hicks.

When the Religious Herald was liquidated in 1877, there appeared instead three newspapers; two at Bland and one at Mechanicsburg. These were as follows:

"Bland County Gazette," established in 1877, edited and published by E. D. Ludwig.

"South and West," published from 1877 to 1879 at Mechanicsburg.

"Greenback," established in 1877, edited and published by E. D. Ludwig and J. M. Harmon. From 1878 to 1879 the same paper was edited by Dr. J. H. Hoge.

The Virginia Chronicle was edited in 1883 by West Dunlap as publisher and C. W. Dunn as local editor.

The South-West, a weekly paper, independent, Republican and Democrat (depending on publisher), was established in 1877 and was edited by James S. Browning, 1877-80; by Dr. John H. Hoge, 1880-1882; by W. I. Boone and W. C. Hedrick, 1882-1886; by Hedrick, 1886-91; by Hedrick and Thomas J. Muncy, 1891-92; by Hedrick and Fulton Kegley, 1892-93; by B. C. Banks, 1893-94; by W. L. Umbarger, 1894-95; by C. W. Dunn, 1895-96; by J. V. Hall, 1896-1903.

The Mountain Watchman, a weekly, independent, Democratic paper, was established in 1883 and was edited by John C. S. Green.

The Reporter, a weekly, was published at Bland from 1901 to 1905 and was an independent paper edited by L. Andrews and C. L. Sneed.

The paper and publication with the longest tenure in Bland County is the present publication, The Bland Messenger, established in 1904, a weekly, independent, Democratic paper which was edited by L. Andrews and Dunn until 1909. Andrews operated alone on the publication from 1909 to 1918, at which time Burton became a partner in the publication. This partnership lasted one year and in 1919 the publication was suspended. The paper was revived in 1922 by J. H. Porterfield and continued in circulation until 1928 under direction of Mr. Porterfield.



The Tribune, a weekly publication, was established in 1919 and edited by C. G. and S. W. Burton until it was discontinued in 1922.

In 1928 publication of the Bland Messenger was assumed by the late James Bascom Muncy, Sr., who edited and published it until his death on October 5, 1953. The publication was continued under the direction of his widow, Mrs. Lorryne C. Muncy, with her son, Raymond McDonald Muncy, as assistant editor.

On January 1, 1958, the Bland Messenger was leased to the Southwest Virginia Enterprise Publishing Company, Wytheville, Virginia, with James A. Williams as editor. Mrs. Muncy was retained as associate editor until August, 1960.

The weekly paper for Bland County, The Bland Messenger, continues to be published and edited by Mr. Williams of the Southwest Virginia Enterprise Company, with Mrs. Melissa Kidd Rudder as associate editor.

The Bland Messenger is dedicated to the advancement and progress of Bland County and its people.

To most of us, James Bascom Muncy, Sr., was one of the most colorful, civic-minded men of our day, a relentless man in expressing his belief and a man of indomitable courage in promoting progress in his native county. Widely and affectionately known and remembered for his "Observer's Column" in the Bland Messenger, Jim was always ready and unselfishly willing to promote an objective that would put Bland "up front."

Were he living today, Jim Muncy would be the first to volunteer his services in paying tribute to our gallant pioneers and the commemoration of this one hundredth anniversary of the formation of Bland County.

an Independent Newspaper Devoted To The Interests Of Island County And Southwest Virginia

### 12. Why A Year In A Day?

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© 2000 Blackwell Science Ltd *Journal of Internal Medicine* 247: 391–397

"MESSENGER" EDITOR USED NEWSPAPER FOR BETTERMENT OF BLAND COUNTY

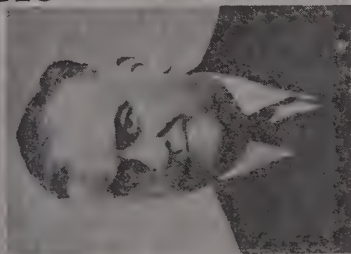
IT IS -30- FOR A FELLOW NEWSPAPERMAN

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the 1990s, the number of people in the world who are illiterate has increased from 1.2 billion to 1.5 billion. The number of illiterate people in the world is expected to reach 1.7 billion by the year 2015. The number of illiterate people in the world is expected to reach 1.7 billion by the year 2015. The number of illiterate people in the world is expected to reach 1.7 billion by the year 2015.

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# COUNTY LOST A FRIEND IN DEATH OF J. B. MUNCY



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 3. *S. setaceus* L.  
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 6. *S. tabernaemontani* (Burm. f.) Stapf & Burdet  
 7. *S. torreyi* (Guss.) Link.  
 8. *S. validus* (L.) Rostk Schmidt  
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## HIS PASTOR'S WORDS OF TRIBUTE

[illegible]

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and their corresponding addresses. The names are listed in a column on the left, and the addresses are listed in a column on the right. The names are: John Doe, Jane Smith, and Bob Johnson. The addresses are: 123 Main St, 456 Elm St, and 789 Oak St.



## CHAPTER XIII

### BLAND COUNTY AGRICULTURE HISTORY

Agriculture in Bland County has made great progress since the formation of the county. In 1861, farming methods were somewhat primitive and the farm family was practically self-sufficient. Gradually, with the improvement in tillage methods, farming has become a more specialized industry.

The early settlers cleared timber land to grow mainly cultivated crops such as corn, oats, buckwheat, and wheat. The pioneers in this area plowed the land with a bull tongue which was made from wood with an iron blade for turning the soil. The soil was harrowed and smoothed by dragging a thorn bush over the ground. Later a spike-toothed "A" shape (home made) harrow was used. This was a wooden-frame harrow with iron spike teeth. After the land was prepared, hand methods were used to plant the seeds.

Many of the early settlers did not have horses. Therefore, oxen were chiefly used to till the soil and ox-carts were an ordinary mode of travel. However, as the county developed, the people used well-bred saddle and carriage horses for traveling.

The usual cropping system used by farmers consisted mainly of cultivated crops that were very soil-depleting without the availability of fertilizer. When the land was cleared it was usually planted for two or three years. The corn was followed by oats or buckwheat, which was followed by wheat.

As the livestock industry of the county developed, more land was gradually seeded to grass crops for hay and pasture. Before the introduction of the mowing machine, hay was cut with a scythe and raked with a home-made wooden rake or a pitchfork.

The early farmers harvested their small grains and buckwheat with a sickle, sometimes referred to as a reap hook. The next improvement for cutting grain was the cradle, which was used by many smaller farmers for many years after the turn of the century.

The forerunner of the reaper and binder was a machine called the buncher and the buncher attachment



for the mowing machine. The reaper and binder were not used by many Bland County farmers until several years after 1900.

Grain was first threshed by the livestock tramping and flail methods. A flail was two pieces of wood fastened together with a leather strap. Men, with the use of this flail, beat the grain from the straw. Then the grain was cleaned with a grain cleaner which farmers called a wind mill.

The early threshing machines were horse-powered mechanisms. According to the older citizens of Bland County, the threshing machine, sometimes referred to as the threshing box, was extensively used in Bland County during the 1880's. Some of the early custom threshing machine operators were: Sam Davis, Sam Ingram and George Miller. According to E. P. Crabtree, he worked as a water boy for a threshing crew in 1890 with his brothers, E. S. and W. T. Crabtree. The next source of threshing machine power was a steam engine which was pulled from farm to farm with oxen. The next step in threshing power was a steam traction engine which was rather widely used for several years after the turn of the century. Sam Ingram was reported to have been one of the early operators of the steam-powered traction engines. A little later, Arlie Umbarger operated a continuous, custom threshing business which started in 1899 and lasted for 52 years.



This threshing machine, operating crew, is a typical scene of the period 1900-1910. Left to right: Arlie Umbarger and Charlie Umbarger.

It was during the 1920's before gasoline tractors were used very much.

Corn shuckings or husking bees were very popular among the early settlers in this area. All the neighbors in the community would assemble for the occasion. The ladies would cook a bountiful meal while the men did the shucking. Usually a jug of moonshine was on the side-line, and the farmer finding the most red ears of corn got to claim the jug as a prize.

Small patches of sorghum or cane were grown on most farms and a great many people used sorghum cane molasses instead of sugar, which was sometimes hard to get. Sorghum molasses and maple syrup are still produced on a limited scale in Bland County.

Very little tobacco was grown in Bland County at the turn of the century, although almost everyone tried to grow a few stalks for his own use. Several years later, when a nearby market developed, burley tobacco became an established cash crop, especially in the Ceres community.

Purebred Shorthorn cattle were the first beef cattle introduced to improve the cattle of the county. Charles S. Grayson had a herd of purebred Shorthorn cattle on the Green Meadows farm prior to 1890. According to W. A. Davidson, his father, John Allen Davidson, brought the first Shorthorn bull into the Wolf Creek valley around 1890. This bull came from the Charles Grayson herd. The Sam Hennegar Shorthorn herd in Burkes Garden was an important early source of breeding cattle for Bland County farmers.

Around 1900, Hereford cattle were introduced into the county and they soon became very popular. John A. Grayson was one of the early breeders of purebred Hereford cattle around Bland.

Still later, Aberdeen Angus cattle were introduced and they were promptly accepted by the cattlemen. By 1934, Angus cattle interest increased sufficiently so that a class was added for them at the Bland County fair.

Although the Shorthorn cattle played an important part in the development of the beef cattle industry in Bland County, they were gradually replaced by Herefords, which became the predominant breed of cattle. However,

on a basis of beef cattle numbers, Angus developed to rank second.

Feeder cattle have been the main product of the beef cattle industry of the area, although for many years three-year-old grass-fed cattle were produced on some of the more productive pastures. After the 1930's, most of the grass-fed cattle were replaced by cow herds or yearlings and two-year-old feeder cattle. Bland County is noted for its top quality feeder calves and yearling feeder cattle. The Hereford and Angus purebred cattle producers have developed excellent herds to furnish breeding stock for this section.

Butter was the main dairy product sold by the farmers for a long time. Before the railroads were built in this territory, butter, as well as other products, was hauled to the nearest rail center at Lynchburg for shipment to market. Butter was packed in firkins and barrels before it was marketed.

Jersey cattle were the first dairy animals imported to improve the milk stock. Holsteins and Guernseys were brought in a little later and Holsteins became the principal line of dairy cattle. Along with the development of good roads and transportation facilities, dairying increased rapidly and replaced part of the beef cattle farming.

The early settlers raised sheep chiefly for wool and mutton for home consumption. Almost all of the wool was home-spun into cloth to make clothes for family use. However, there was a limited sale of part of the cloth. When transportation facilities improved so farmers had a ready market for lambs and wool, sheep became an important enterprise.

The first breeds of purebred sheep brought in were Dorsets, Hampshire and Shropshires. Captain Andrew Jackson Grayson was one of the early breeders of Dorset sheep.

Around 1915, Henry Bowen started raising purebred Hampshire sheep. A year or two later, T. Cicero Thompson started a herd of purebred Hampshire sheep from breeding stock he obtained at Burkes Garden. Soon after this, Albert L. Newberry started in the purebred Hampshire sheep business.

Many years later Suffolk and Southdown sheep were introduced. In 1935, J. A. Muncy and George T. Thompson established purebred Southdown herds.

There were great changes in the types of crops produced in the area as the livestock and dairy enterprises expanded. Permanent pasture and sod-hay crops have replaced a large portion of the grain crops.

The change to livestock-type farming, the introduction of fertilizer and practicing good crop rotations have enabled the farmers to more than double their crop yields.

According to the United States Census Bureau, the number of farms in Bland County increased to 918 in 1939. Since 1940 the number of farms decreased to 552 in 1959. During the same period the average size of the farms increased from 132.7 acres to 200.9 acres.

The services of the United States Department of Agriculture and the Virginia State agricultural agencies have greatly helped the farmers of this area in their agricultural progress.

## **THE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE PROGRAM**

The county agricultural agent's work is part of an educational program of the Agricultural Extension Service of Virginia Polytechnic Institute. The Agricultural Extension Service was made possible by the Smith-Lever Act which was passed by congress May 8, 1914.

The Act gave authority for the United States Department of Agriculture and the State land-grant colleges to join forces in establishing and maintaining an educational program to aid rural people. In general, this is an educational program to help rural people help themselves and improve their standard of living.

The first county agricultural agent was employed in Bland County in 1918. Listed below are the names of the county agents who have served the county and the period of service.



Name	Period of Service
H. S. Peyton .....	1918 - 1921
H. P. Marshall .....	1923 - 1932
T. M. Hepler .....	1934 - 1936
T. E. Mallory .....	1936 - Present

Starting in 1935 and continuing for 15 years, assistant county agents were employed and are listed as follows:

Name	Period of Service
T. E. Mallory .....	1935 - 1936
C. C. Mast .....	1936 - 1939
J. S. Buchanan .....	1939 - 1941
G. C. Boothe .....	1941 - 1942
J. O. Gunter .....	1943 - 1946
J. S. Buchanan .....	1946 -
G. A. Allen, Jr. ....	1947 - 1949
R. Frank Marshall .....	1949 - 1950

For the first few months of 1935, Forrest L. Bocock and G. D. Kite worked as part-time assistants in Bland and Wythe Counties.

Since the early years of Agricultural Extension Work in Bland County, the county agents have carried on an educational program with both the rural adults and youths.

The educational program with the youth is known as the 4-H Club program. In the 4-H Club program, the extension service personnel work mostly with boys and girls 10 to 21 years of age.

The fact that people learn best by doing and what they see has prompted the county agent to use demonstrations as one of the important teaching methods.

The Virginia Agricultural Extension Service, in cooperation with the Tennessee Valley Authority, launched a test demonstration farm program in 1935. To promote this program and the agriculture of Southwest Virginia, the Southwest Virginia Agricultural Association was formed the same year, comprising the counties which had land draining into the Tennessee River watershed. Each of the counties in the area formed a test demonstration farm association which made up the membership of the South-

west Virginia Agricultural Association. George H. Peery was the first director to represent Bland County in this association.

The first Bland County Test Demonstration Association committeemen were: S. K. Groseclose, Way Penley, T. C. Thompson, and W. D. Tuggle. It was the duty of this committee to manage the affairs of the association and, in consultation with the county agent, select the test demonstration farmers.

Listed below are the first twenty test demonstration farmers selected to pioneer in pasture fertilization:

Mechanicsburg District — C. M. Bane, E. M. Hoge, C. A. Mitchell, John A. Newberry, Way Penley.

Seddon District — Ben L. Bird, T. D. Hubble, J. A. Muncy, R. F. Robinett, T. C. Thompson.

Sharon District — C. R. Barger, Mrs. Lou K. Compton, George H. Peery, L. B. Scott, E. F. Umbarger.

Rocky Gap District — W. B. Bird, W. A. Davidson, J. W. Shrader, W. E. Stowers, W. D. Tuggle.

The Tennessee Valley Authority furnished fertilizer for pasture and meadow fertilization on these test demonstration farms.

This test demonstration farm program was the forerunner of extensive farm crop and pasture improvement in the county. It was the object of these demonstrations to make these test farms complete units in good farm management. Therefore, many livestock improvement demonstrations were conducted on these farms.

Some of the other services available through the county agent's office are: agricultural bulletins, free farm buildings plans, and the services of V.P.I. extension specialists to help with farming problems.

## HOME DEMONSTRATION CLUBS

Home demonstration work is an essential part of the educational program of the Cooperative Extension Service in Agriculture and Home Economics. This nationwide system of out-of-school education was established by congress

through passage of the Smith-Lever Act of May 8, 1914. The Act gave authority for the United States Department of Agriculture and the State land-grant colleges to join forces in establishing and maintaining an out-of-school education program to aid rural men, women, boys, and girls in improving their farms, their homes, and their communities. Under the terms of the Act, funds for extension work are provided by Federal, State, and County governments and are administered by the cooperative extension services of the land-grant colleges. In Virginia, Virginia Polytechnic Institute administers this service.

The county is the key unit of the extension service. There are a county agent and home demonstration agent in Bland County. They are employed by V.P.I. and are responsible both to the college and the people of the county for the development of and conducting the extension educational program.

Since the beginning of extension service, its basic philosophy has been to "help people help themselves". Extension programs are planned by the people in the county, and the county home demonstration agent works cooperatively with families and community leaders in helping them to analyze their farm and home situation, to recognize major problems and to develop programs that will aid them in making any desired changes. A major responsibility of the county and home agents is to get the results of agriculture and home economics to families in a form they can readily understand.

Home demonstration work in Bland County is comparatively new, although there has been an opportunity for it since 1914. It was started in 1930 with Miss Helen Alverson as agent and lasted one year. It was resumed September 1, 1950, and has run consecutively for the past ten years. In the beginning there were three different home agents in as many years. Miss Ruth M. Bost was the first agent, who came in September, 1950, became Mrs. Carico, and stayed until August, 1952. Then Mrs. Katheryn K. Duckett was employed and only stayed four months. Then Mrs. Bane Crabtree, a Bland Countian trained in home economics work, took over until someone else could be found. On November 15, 1953, Miss Mary E. Hagler was made Bland County Home Demonstration Agent and has continued to the present time. Under the guidance of the different agents, there have been organized thirteen

home demonstration clubs with a membership of 225 homemakers. Though these clubs and the 4-H Clubs, personal contacts, and the local press, practically every homemaker in Bland County has been reached in some way and helped to help themselves.

## **AGRICULTURAL ADJUSTMENT AND CONSERVATION PROGRAM**

During the early depression years of the 1930's, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration farm program came to Bland County. The purpose of the first Agricultural Adjustment Program was to reduce the agricultural surplus products inventories and reduce the shock of the depression to farmers.

In 1934 and 1935, farmers received cash payments for reducing the production of corn, hogs, and tobacco.

The adjustment program was changed in 1936 with an agricultural conservation program added and an acreage control program continued on tobacco.

The conservation program, with financial assistance to farmers for applying conservation farming practices to their land, has been in constant operation since it was started. During the first few years of the Agricultural Adjustment Program it was administered through the county agent's office.

The affairs of the program are handled by a three-member county committee with the county agent serving as an ex-officio member.

Late in 1936 a chief clerk, or county office manager, was hired to work on the program. W. R. Dillow served as county office manager from 1936 to 1945 and R. C. Kidd has held this position since 1945.

The name of the program was changed to Production Marketing Administration in 1946 and to Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation in 1954. An acreage allotment control program has been in operation on burley tobacco each year since the program started with the exception of one year. In the 1950's, wheat acreage allotments were put into effect.



The agricultural conservation part of this program has been a great financial aid to farmers in the conservation of their soil and improvement of their farms.

### SKYLINE SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

In 1953, Bland County voted to be included in the Skyline Soil Conservation District in order to obtain additional assistance in soil and water conservation work.

The Skyline Soil Conservation District was originally organized in December, 1941, and included the counties of Giles, Pulaski, and Montgomery. Wythe County was added in October, 1948, and Bland County was added in July, 1953.

When the county entered the soil conservation district program, it made it possible to secure the services of Soil Conservation Service personnel. The Soil Conservation Service is an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture.

The affairs of the Soil Conservation District are directed by five supervisors who serve without salary. According to the Soil Conservation District Law of Virginia, one of the supervisors must be a county agricultural agent. The first supervisor was selected from Bland County in 1956. T. E. Mallory, Bland County Agent, has been a supervisor on this board from 1956 to 1961. It is the duty of the Soil Conservation Service personnel assigned to the county to give farmers technical assistance with soil and water conservation problems. Below is a list of the Soil Conservation Service personnel who have been assigned to Bland County since the county entered the Soil Conservation District program:

Name	Period of Service
William M. Holcomb, Soil Conservationist ....	1953 - present
J. P. Thomas, Soil Conservation Aid .....	1953 - 1954
J. V. Shockley, Soil Conservation Aid .....	1954 - present

Some of the many soil and water conservation projects with which the Soil Conservation Service has assisted are: Farm ponds, land drainage, contour strip cropping, developing soil seeps and springs for livestock water, and the improvement of land vegetative cover for erosion control.

## CHAPTER XIV

### CIVIC CLUBS AND FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS

Bland has gradually become a highly organized county. Community needs, churches, schools, patriotism, and politics have been the incentives for the organization of many of these groups.

Struggling against the odds of having little income from industry and the hazards of rural mountain transportation, the citizens of Bland County have banded together many times in an effort to further their education and culture; meet the needs of their local communities, state, and nation; and preserve the natural beauty of their county.

### MASONIC LODGES

Bland County was five years old when its first Masonic Lodge came into existence. Bland Lodge 206, AF & AM, was chartered on December 12, 1866, with William E. Hoge as Worshipful Master; and it continued for thirty years as the only lodge in the county. Then, on December 3, 1896, Ceres Lodge 262, AF & AM, was chartered at Ceres with W. K. Groseclose as Worshipful Master.

Ceres Lodge 262 was active until 1950 when it surrendered its charter and most of its active members affiliated with Bland Lodge 206.

The third and last lodge chartered in Bland County was Elbert Muncy Lodge 298 which was chartered at Rocky Gap on February 12, 1931, with A. L. Quillen as Worshipful Master.

Both present lodges have recently moved into new temples, further evidence that the Masonic Order continues to grow in Bland County. As of January, 1961, membership was 170 — Bland having 119 and Rocky Gap 51 members.

(1)

Bland Lodge No. 206, A.F. & A.M.

Bland, Virginia

Chartered December 12, 1866

William E. Hoge — Worshipful Master

G. H. Morgan — Senior Warden

F. E. Yearly — Junior Warden

(2)

Ceres Lodge No. 262, A.F. & A.M.

Ceres, Virginia

Chartered December 3, 1896

W. K. Groseclose — Worshipful Master

H. E. Perry — Senior Warden

C. M. Scott — Junior Warden

(3)

Elbert Muncy Lodge No. 298, A.F. & A.M.

Rocky Gap, Virginia

Chartered February 12, 1931

A. L. Quillen — Worshipful Master

G. C. Cox — Senior Warden

P. F. Shrader — Junior Warden

### **HENRY C. GROSECLOSE AND THE F.F.A. IN BLAND COUNTY**



**Bland Countian Founder of F.F.A.**

up in a short and beautiful way the story and life of Henry

In his book, "The Green Hand," written about the Future Farmers of America and dedicated to the late Henry Casper Groseclose II, Paul W. Chapman, past State Director of Vocational Agriculture in the State of Georgia, said in his dedication: "Henry Groseclose, the far-visioned cavalier from Virginia who gave a new meaning to F.F.V. and conceived the plan which led to the organization of the Future Farmers of America". This statement sums

C. Groseclose, or simply "Henry" to those who knew him so well and wanted to refer to him in an affectionate sort of way.

Henry C. Groseclose II was born at Ceres, Virginia, May 17, 1892, on a 157-acre farm, the son of Henry Casper and Lavenia Peery Groseclose. His father named the birthplace Ceres, Goddess of Grain. Henry attended Ceres High School, completing the ten sessions available there. After his father's death, his mother moved to Lexington, Virginia. He continued his education at Washington and Lee University from 1909 to 1912. A Junior College degree was received from Washington and Lee in 1917. Henry Groseclose taught school for three years at Belle Haven High School, three years at Curdsville, and three years at Buckingham. He served as school principal for seven of those nine years. He attended Virginia Polytechnic Institute at Blacksburg, Virginia, and received the BS degree in 1923 and the MS degree in Vocational Agriculture in 1927. Mr. Groseclose became a member of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute faculty as an instructor in 1924 and then as a professor of Agricultural Education and Teacher-Trainer. He retained the latter position until his retirement from that institution in 1945. In 1929 he was acting State High School Supervisor. He served as Superintendent of Bland County Schools from July 1, 1946 to July 1, 1948. His untimely death occurred, after a lifetime marred by frequent illnesses, in a Bluefield, West Virginia hospital on June 4, 1950.

While teaching agriculture at Buckingham High School in 1919, Henry Groseclose used his agriculture students to make a survey of agricultural practices and production on 100 neighborhood farms. He found it hard to interest his students in farming. He wanted the farm boy to idealize his job as a farmer, wanted him to be proud of being a farmer and not to be handicapped because of being a farm boy. The story is told that one day after school some of Mr. Groseclose's students lingered and discussed the F.F.V.'s, the First Families of Virginia. Their minds went back to the early days of Virginia when George Washington and Thomas Jefferson were proud to be called American Farmers. They belonged to the First Families of Virginia, the F.F.V.'s. Henry Groseclose knew that both men



held their heads high and were proud to be farmers, which they both were at heart.

George Washington and Thomas Jefferson loved the soil they tilled, they imported and bred good livestock, they built beautiful farm homes, they planted many trees, they practiced soil conservation, they cultivated flowers to make their homes beautiful, they had an appreciation of the out-of-doors, and they made country living a fine art just as many thousands of Future Farmers of America members have done through the years. The best farmers of that day idealized the job of farming until it was considered the thing to own and till the soil. Henry Groseclose told the boys that they were the real F.F.V.'s — Future Farmers of Virginia, and that was a lot more important than being a blueblood.

Probably this was when a great inspiration struck him. These boys must be cured of their inferiority complex which had been built up about farming. He wondered if there might be some way of getting the farm boy to see that farming was a fine, sane mode of making a living. He wondered what could be done to give the farm boy training so that when he went off to college he wouldn't be so "green" and would be better fitted to take his place along with other students in leadership ability, making talks, and other activities in which he himself had felt so unqualified. Farm boys lacked confidence; he dreamed of a way of correcting this situation. In the spring of 1922, Henry Groseclose organized a Buckingham Agricultural Boy's Club which met a few times before he left for Virginia Polytechnic Institute. Little did these boys at Buckingham realize that later he was to become one of the great F.F.A. organizers.

Walter S. Newman, state supervisor of vocational agriculture, proposed the idea of a state-wide organization of vocational agriculture students in 1925. At a meeting at V.P.I., Walter S. Newman and Professors Henry C. Groseclose, Harry W. Sanders and Edmund C. Magill discussed the formation of a farm boy's organization. The table around which they met is now inscribed with a plaque which reads: "At this table in September, 1925, it was determined that boys studying agriculture should have their own organization — now the F.F.A."

The task of organizing a state association of vocational agriculture was assigned to Professor Henry C. Groseclose by Walter S. Newman, who later became president of V.P.I. That the job was well done has been proved by the fast growth of the state organization, by the fact that Professor Groseclose was soon to help with the National Vocational Agriculture organization; and that most of the work done in connection with the Future Farmers of Virginia was used as a nucleus for many other state associations and later for the Future Farmers of America organization, with only minor revisions being made in Professor Groseclose's work before incorporating it into these other organizations.

During the early months of 1926, Professor Groseclose spent several months in Johns Hopkins Hospital receiving medical treatment and recuperating from his illness. While recuperating he worked out plans for a state boys' agriculture organization in Virginia. After returning to work, he began to work in earnest to sell his ideas to the agriculture teachers and vocational agriculture students in rural high schools. His plans were enthusiastically received and he was eminently successful. Getting such a wonderful idea over to the teachers of classes of agriculture in high schools wasn't hard. Splendid, healthy enthusiasm among the youthful members and Professor Groseclose's knack of getting things across tell the story that he sold an idea wonderfully, which is evidenced by the fast growth of an organization that now covers 49 states and Puerto Rico with a membership of approximately 380,000 in 9,000 local chapters.

The state supervisor of agriculture education, Walter S. Newman, in April of 1926 presented the idea of a state organization of high school agriculture students at the state rally of the boys and their teachers. As much of the ground-work had already been done, the suggestion of a state organization was well received. Professor Groseclose in June presented the constitution and by-laws for the organization along with the name, Future Farmers of Virginia. The idea and name caught on like wildfire. The state agriculture teachers at their conference in July, 1926, adopted the Groseclose objectives; the first F.F.V. publication was published in December, and the first F.F.V. officers were elected April 28, 1927.

The Future Farmers of Virginia was Professor Groseclose's dream come true. He was not just an idle dreamer. While working on the idea of a state organization for high school agriculture students during his illness, this young man's dreams were of something big and worthwhile. Many young men have dreams but most of them are not accomplished with nearly as much enthusiasm. In this young man's mind he went out to the countryside, to the country stores and the crossroads to visit with and listen to farmers talk of their problems and their vocation. They often spoke of their work as drudgery, as being mean and hard. He wanted so much to do something to help the rural youth. In addition to the constitution and by-laws, Professor Groseclose also worked on the Aims and Purposes, the formal ritual for opening and closing the meetings, the induction ceremony for the degree of Green Hand and the various degrees of membership. The first Future Farmers of Virginia emblem was worked out by Professor Groseclose and R. W. Cline in 1927.

In March, 1928, a Southern Regional Conference dealing with vocational education met at Memphis, Tennessee. Professor Groseclose was chairman of a committee which gave an exhaustive report on recommendations for a Future Farmers of Dixie organization, which was later dropped in favor of a national organization. The owl, plow and rising sun were the basis for the Future Farmers of Dixie insignia and were copied from the Virginia emblem.

During the summer of 1928, Federal workers, members of the Agriculture Education Service of the Federal Board for Vocational Education, Washington, D. C., mapped out a national organization patterned closely after that of the Future Farmers of Virginia. Professor Groseclose was called in from time to time to assist in the work. Federal workers were interested in such an organization because of the Smith-Hughes Act, an act of National Congress passed in 1917 that created a national vocational agriculture program along with an appropriation of federal funds to be matched by states in the instruction of vocational agriculture in rural high schools.

This would be a national organization that would develop a related organization specifically for agriculture students with the idea of making them well-rounded citi-

zens. Most of the early agriculture clubs were formed to stimulate interest or to solve community problems. Now here was a national organization of, by, and for boys studying vocational agriculture in public secondary school so that these boys might learn the lessons of kindness, to accept responsibility, to improve agriculture, to have better local communities, to have a more satisfying farm home life, and a more efficient farmer-citizen would emerge as the result.

Eighteen states held the first national convention of the Future Farmers of America in the Baltimore Hotel in Kansas City, Missouri, on November 20, 1928. Professor Groseclose was named national treasurer, a job he held until he resigned in 1940. He was also appointed executive secretary. He held this job until a member of the Federal Board of Vocational Agriculture took over in 1930. The Virginia Association, Future Farmers of America, was granted the first national charter and Professor Groseclose was the first to receive the honorary American Farmer Degree in recognition of his many services. At the 1929 national convention the Virginia delegation demonstrated an initiation ceremony which was promulgated by Henry Groseclose.

At the 1931 national F.F.A. convention, the Virginia Association received the first state association award to be given. Professor Groseclose was then state advisor and remained as advisor of the Virginia association until his retirement as a professor at V.P.I. in 1945.

The original ceremonies, degrees of membership, and aims and purposes of the organization are still in use, signifying that Henry C. Groseclose's rich store of experience was invaluable in getting such a wonderful organization as the Future Farmers of America started off on such a strong footing. His work was so sound. Hundreds of thousands of farm youth have been thrilled and inspired by some of the statements in the opening and closing ritual of the Green Hand initiation ceremony. An example of this is the following words spoken by the treasurer in the Green Hand initiation ceremony:

"May I call your attention to the pictures at my station? Washington was an engineer, a general, a presi-



dent, and the Father of Our Country, but he was a farmer first, last, and all the time. His old home at Mt. Vernon is a model farmstead. He kept farm accounts, practiced rotations, and lived the life of a country gentleman.

"Another of our former presidents was Thomas Jefferson. He was the author of the Declaration of Independence, the author of the Statute for Religious Freedom, the founder of a state university, America's first architect, and a statesman as well as a president. He found time to terrace his Virginia farm and make it more productive. He invented a steel plow and a grain drill. Like Washington, he spent his last years on the farm.

"These men, early in our history, clearly demonstrated that a real farmer who uses his training and intelligence can reach the top rung of the ladder of success. May you use your talents and training for the betterment of yourselves and your fellowmen."

These words still carry a very important message for the boy interested in farming as a career.

Many newspapers and publications since the early days of the Future Farmers of America organization have given the lion's share of the credit for organizing the F.F.A. to Henry C. Groseclose.

*Coronet*, March, 1948, says, "F.F.A. is the brain child of Henry C. Groseclose".

*The Techgram* (V.P.I.), June 1, 1931, says Mr. Groseclose was the "founder of the F.F.A."

*The Garland Texas News*, January 16, 1931, carried a one-fourth page picture of Henry C. Groseclose and said he was the "founder of F.F.A."

*The Virginia Tech*, Blacksburg, Virginia, April 28, 1931, says that Henry Groseclose was honored as "the founder of the F.F.A."

*Southern Agriculturist*, February, 1931, spoke of Henry Groseclose as having "a dream of something big

and worthwhile — a vivid dream” and that he was assigned the task of organizing the F.F.V., which he did in a very successful manner.

*The Tulsa Daily World*, Tulsa, Oklahoma, April 7, 1931, told of a conference of teacher trainers, supervisors and instructors for the 12 states in the Southern Region division for vocational workers where “Henry C. Groseclose, of Blacksburg, Virginia, founder of the ‘Future Farmers of America,’ the official boy’s organization for Vocational Agriculture” was present.

The January issue of the Georgia *GAFFA* in 1933 said that Henry Groseclose was the “founder of the F.F.A.”

The March issue of the Virginia F.F.A. *Chapter Chats* in 1942 said “Henry C. Groseclose was paid a tribute at the annual banquet of the V.P.I. Collegiate Chapter, F.F.A., for his major role in developing the original F.F.V. and the national organization which grew out of it.”

The September, 1945, issue of *Agricultural Leader’s Digest* said, “One of the prime movers in the first organization of the F.F.A.” with reference to Henry C. Groseclose.

The July, 1950 issue of *The Progressive Farmer* spoke of Henry Groseclose as being more truly than anyone else the “Father of F.F.A.” and that “he breathed into the organization an uplifting, ennobling spiritual quality it will always possess.” The caption under his picture went on to say, “He also served nobly the agriculture of the whole South and the Nation.” The February, 1953, issue of *The Progressive Farmer* also spoke of Henry C. Groseclose as the “beloved Father of F.F.A.”

The Future Farmers of America organization *What It Is — What It Does* pamphlet, prepared by the national organization of Future Farmers of America in cooperation with the U. S. Office of Education, Federal Security Agency, says “the pioneer efforts of F.F.V. attracted the greatest attention nationally due to the very excellent ideals, purposes, ceremonies, and definite constitution formulated by Henry C. Groseclose and his associates.”

Selected quotations from letters received by Henry C. Groseclose from throughout the entire United States add prestige to the local honor of being known as the founder of the Future Farmers of America.

Letter of March 21, 1941, from Phillip Alampi, F.F.A. advisor at Woodstown, New Jersey, states "As founder of this great National Organization . . ."

Letter of February 21, 1941, from Stanley S. Richardson, State Supervisor of Agriculture Education, Boise, Idaho, said ". . . your responsibility in making the National F.F.A. possible. . ."

A letter from S. M. Jackson, State Supervisor of Agriculture, Baton Rouge, La., dated February 15, 1941, said, "May I say you have done a splendid job, not only as National Treasurer but as being the founder of the most wonderful organization for boys that I know of today."

J. L. Perrin, State Supervisor of Agricultural Education from Missouri, had this to say, "I think that in starting this organization, you have done the greatest thing which has been done to help vocational agriculture."

April 28, 1941, M. D. Mobley, then state director of vocational education in Georgia and now executive secretary of American Vocational Association, had this to say, "The farm youth of this nation are indebted to you for the idea you conceived that has resulted in the greatest farm youth organization that has ever been established in this country."

A letter from a man on the scene at the time, such as the letter from Harris Hart dated December 16, 1929, saying, "This Future Farmers movement originating with you . . ." means a lot when determining the founder of the F.F.A. Harris Hart was then Superintendent of Public Instruction in Virginia.

How great an individual is and the value of his contributions to mankind are often not realized until some time later. Time often dims the memory of those working with such an individual when great ideas are born. Fortunately, newsprint and penmanship remain indefinite-

ly to revive the past and enable us to relive those great moments again. In spite of his accomplishments, such as being the patron of such an outstanding organization, Henry C. Groseclose remained a modest and retiring sort of fellow. Various states have honored him in different ways, such as the state that named its camp "Camp Henry".

The late E. Y. Noblin, professor of vocational agriculture at V.P.I., summed up the contributions of Groseclose to the F.F.V. and the F.F.A. in the following way: "Groseclose originated the name . . . produced the constitution and by-laws which, with some minor revisions, were accepted by both the state and national organizations . . . he gave the idea of progressive membership based on achievement and the names for the degrees . . . he developed the emblem, the key, and the seal which was almost identical with that of today with the exception of the cross-section of an ear of corn . . . he perfected the induction ceremony for the Green Hands . . . he wrote the first handbook and arranged for financing it . . . secured the plow emblems . . . and played an important part in securing incorporation for the national organization."

In the January, 1947 issue of *The Progressive Farmer*, Henry C. Groseclose was named "Man-of-the-Year" in agriculture. The award was made, the magazine explains, for all the work Mr. Groseclose did 20 years ago that "won him national recognition as being more truly than any other man the 'Father of F.F.A.' and every year that work of his grows in value and importance not only to his native state of Virginia but to the whole nation."



Homestead of Henry C. Groseclose



## TWENTY-TWO YEARS OF PROGRESS WITH THE F.F.A. IN BLAND COUNTY

The Future Farmers of America organization had its birth in Bland County in 1939 with the completion of two vocational agriculture buildings, one at Ceres and the other located at Bland. Professor Henry C. Groseclose visited the county on several occasions and spoke in favor of starting vocational agriculture classes in the high schools. The two above-mentioned agriculture buildings were completed in 1939 with funds furnished through the Federal Works Agency by means of the Public Works Administration. At that time J. A. Wagner was superintendent of Bland County Schools, and W. E. Stowers, R. F. Robinett, J. W. Morehead and Milton Groseclose were serving as members of the school board.

In the public schools in Bland County the Future Farmers of America activities have always been an integral part of the program of vocational education in agriculture. It has not been the purpose of vocational agriculture to displace other education but rather to provide practical education for that group of students who wanted agricultural training in addition to their academic courses. To be a member of the Future Farmers of America, the student must first be enrolled as a student of vocational agriculture. Extra-curricular activities are carried on through the Future Farmers of America organization and include the actual doing of all of the things that the boy will be called upon to do in his community after he has finished high school.

The intra-curricular activities of the Future Farmer Chapters have their origin and root as a definite part of the school curriculum — vocational agriculture. Students learn how to conduct and take part in public meetings, to speak in public, to buy and sell cooperatively, to solve their own problems, to finance themselves and to assume civic responsibility. A typical example would be Robert S. Bane. He became an officer and leader in the Bland Chapter, a public speaker, a judge of livestock and a student interested in community affairs. Since his high school days he has served two terms as president of the Mechanicsburg Ruritan Club, state president of the Young Farmers Associa-

tion, an officer and leader in his church, and an officer in the Bland-Giles Hereford Association. Many others like Bobby throughout the county, state and nation have become leaders in such organizations as Ruritan, Lions, and Kiwanis; churches, community clubs and county, state and national politics; many as members of law-making bodies.

The charters for the Future Farmer chapters at Bland and Ceres High Schools were signed on March 4, 1940 by the state advisor, Henry C. Groseclose. B. M. Wright started as instructor of vocational agriculture and advisor of the Bland F.F.A. Chapter on July 1, 1939, with J. E. Rutrough starting at Ceres in the same position at the same time. Mr. Wright continued at Bland until his death in April of 1946, at which time Donald Allen took over to finish out the school term. Ralph R. Reynolds started with the September term of school in the fall of 1946. Mr. Wright taught at Ceres for a year when Rutrough entered the armed forces in 1942. Mr. Rutrough continued at Ceres until July 1, 1947, when he was replaced by Eugene Orr, who remained until July, 1954. From July, 1954, until March, 1956, Otis Farmer, Roy Meek and Woodrow Scott filled in as instructors of vocational agriculture. Sidney B. Harvey assumed the teaching duties and became advisor of the Ceres F.F.A. Chapter on March 1, 1956.

The Rocky Gap vocational agriculture building was built in 1949 with Bruce Robertson taking over as instructor and advisor of the Rocky Gap F.F.A. Chapter on July 1 of that year and remained until 1957. Mahlon K. Rhudy started his teaching assignment on July 1, 1957. The Rocky Gap F.F.A. Chapter was chartered in the fall of 1949.

Vocational agriculture students and members of the Future Farmers of America from Bland schools have shared heavily in the awards and honors offered by the national organization. The chapters have received many awards for chapter activities as well.

In the fall of 1949, George Henry Peery, Jr. received the first American Farmer Degree to be awarded to a Bland County boy. This is the highest degree that can be earned by a Future Farmer. This coveted degree is

awarded on the basis of one per 1000 membership. At the same time, William Henry Groseclose, a graduate of Ceres High School but a resident of Smyth County, was awarded the 4th Degree of American Farmer.

From the Bland Chapter, Future Farmers of America, Robert S. Bane received his American Farmer Degree in 1953; David S. Miller, in 1956; Daniel W. Bird, Jr., in 1958; and Dunn Brown Waddle, in 1959. Richard Gregory of the Rocky Gap F.F.A. Chapter, received the American Farmer Degree in 1956. Ralph R. Reynolds, advisor of the Bland Chapter, was awarded the honorary American Farmer Degree at the national F.F.A. convention held in Kansas City, Missouri, in the fall of 1950.

In the national chapter contest, six gold emblems have been awarded to chapters in the county. In the state competition, certain chapters are chosen to represent the state in the national contest. National awards are presented as gold, silver, and bronze emblems and honorable mention. The Bland chapter received the highest rating of gold emblem in 1950, '51, '54 and '56. The Rocky Gap chapter received the gold emblem in 1953 and '54.

M. H. Bowen, Jr. participated in the national F.F.A. livestock judging contest held at the national convention in the fall of 1947. He was a member of the Virginia team, which members were selected on the basis of the three highest individuals throughout the state. M. H. was representing the Bland Chapter.

Stafford Shewey brought honors to the Ceres Chapter when he placed first in the Seaboard Railway Forestry contest in 1953 and received a trip to the national F.F.A. convention in Kansas City. He had accomplished more than any other F.F.A. member in the state in forestry during his four years of high school.

Ben Hale Muncy, Willard Fanning, and Robert S. Bane, Bland's entry in the state F.F.A. livestock judging contest in 1950, won the state contest and represented Virginia at the national livestock judging contest at the national convention.

The Rocky Gap chapter was the recipient of the national F.F.A. farm safety award in 1956. In order to gain this recognition they had to be declared state and regional winners. Earl S. Stinson, of the same chapter, was the national winner in the F.F.A. farm electrification contest in 1957. He also was a state and regional winner.

Three state officers in the Virginia Association, Future Farmers of America, have been selected from the Bland Chapter. Robert S. Bane was selected as reporter in 1951, David S. Miller as president in 1954, and Danny W. Bird, Jr. as state president in 1956.

The Bland Chapter has nominated the following adults in the community to receive the Honorary State Farmers Degree and all were presented their degrees at various state conventions. These men were George Ralph Brown, James B. Muncy, Sr., Eugene Smith, Ralph R. Reynolds, Victor R. Gilly, D. Woodrow Bird, Sr., and James O. Morehead. The Ceres chapter was successful in the nomination of George H. Peery, Sr. to receive this honor. These men were selected to receive the honorary degree in the state association due to their interest and help in the F.F.A. program.

In 1952 the chapters of Bland, Ceres, and Rocky Gap, located in Bland County, and Draper and Dublin chapters from Pulaski County, combined to form the Henry C. Groseclose F.F.A. Federation. The name was chosen in honor of the founder of the Future Farmers of America organization, a native Bland Countian.

The enrollment in vocational agriculture and Future Farmers clubs in the county varies from 80 to 125 each year. A large number of those who have taken vocational agriculture are now engaged in farming or are in closely related occupations.

National headquarters of the F.F.A. are located in the Agricultural Education Service, United States Office of Education, Federal Security Agency, Agriculture Education Branch, Office of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, D. C.



## KIWANIS

The Bland Kiwanis Club was the first civic club organized on a county-wide basis. It was formed in 1940 with 25 charter members. The first club president was James H. Gollehon. The club has constantly kept its high status by participating in inter-club visits and other activities throughout the district. The members tactfully boast that Charles Dunn, from the Bland Kiwanis Club, served as Lieutenant Governor of the Third Division of the Capitol District for 1960. The club maintains its own meeting place in the Bland Community Building, which houses a rare collection of big game heads donated to the county by the late John A. Newberry.

Charter — dated April 5, 1940 (Silver Anniversary of Kiwanis International) — lists the following:

Club Officers — James H. Gollehon, President; Tom Mallory, Vice President; James H. Muncy, Secretary; John R. Stafford, Treasurer.

Directors — G. A. Allen, F. L. Dunn, E. E. Shannon, W. H. Gilmore, G. C. Hamilton, B. M. Wright and Percy Curry.

Charter Members — G. A. Allen, R. E. Argabrite, Rev. Raymond L. Booze, Lieut. George Brashears, J. Sam Buchanan, Percy S. Curry, W. S. Dunn, Frank L. Dunn, James H. Gollehon, Lieut. W. H. Gilmore, G. C. Hamilton, Rev. J. A. Hardin, H. B. Hubble, J. B. Muncy, Charles P. Muncy, T. E. Mallory, Rev. M. D. Newton, A. L. Newberry, G. R. Repass, J. R. Stafford, E. E. Shannon, Dr. Harry Steinberg, J. W. Thompson, Gilmer Updyke, B. M. Wright.

Officers of New Kiwanis Club in Bland



## RURITAN

Ruritan Clubs, whose motto is "Community Service." have been organized in Ceres, Bland, Rocky Gap and Mechanicsburg. While serving as Ruritan District Governor of Southwest Virginia in 1951, George Peery, Sr. set a new record in leadership by forming four new clubs in three nights.

### Ceres Ruritan — Charter Number 249

Ceres Ruritan Club was the first in the county, formed on September 17, 1948 by the Dublin Club. Eugene Orr served as the first president with forty charter members. Succeeding him, the following served as presidents: Bruce Hubble, Woodrow Scott, Paul Crabtree, George Peery, Sr., J. M. Thomas, Glen Shufflebarger, Carl W. Scott, G. R. Brown, George Peery, Jr., and J. H. Groseclose, Jr.

The Ceres Club won the district "Community Service" plaque in 1951.

### Rocky Gap Ruritan — Charter Number 336

On May 9, 1950, the Rocky Gap Ruritan Club received its charter with forty members. The first club president was Bruce Robertson. One of the major community services completed by the Rocky Gap club has been securing a new and satisfactory telephone system for that community.

Succeeding Bruce Robertson, the following have served as president: Victor R. Gilly, Joe Compton, Harry Stowers, W. B. Bird, L. R. Sands, J. H. Lambert, R. G. Preston, Jr., Raymond F. Stowers, Ray Davis, and Mahlon K. Rhudy.

The Rocky Gap club helped to secure Route No. 61 from Narrows through Rocky Gap to Tazewell. They also were instrumental in securing a fire department for their community.

## **Mechanicsburg Ruritan**

The Mechanicsburg Ruritan Club received official charter Number 447 on December 17, 1951. The thirty-one charter members chose John S. (Buddy) Penley as their first president. In the Mechanicsburg community the Ruritan members have worked constantly in promoting better school facilities for their children.

Succeeding John S. Penley, the following have served as president: M. S. Stafford, Leighton Newberry, Bobby Bane, Wayne Richardson, Carl Newberry, B. C. Atwell, Ralph R. Reynolds, and James D. Cox.

## **Bland Ruritan**

The Bland Ruritan Club had its beginning on January 13, 1959 and was under the leadership of J. V. Shockley, Jr. for the first year. The club has been an asset to the community by working very closely with other organizations on major community projects and has furnished leadership for the Boy Scouts, fire department, and other groups. The club has on record 23 charter members.

Succeeding presidents following Mr. Shockley have been Randall Richardson and Daniel Earnest, Jr.

Charter members (Official Chapter No. 940) are: J. V. Shockley, B. L. Bird, J. C. Bohara, W. F. Brown, L. A. Cochrane, M. Dillow, R. G. Dillow, D. P. Earnest, Jr., V. R. Goins, H. R. Hall, P. C. Kegley, E. E. Shannon, C. D. Kidd, R. C. Kidd, G. K. Morehead, A. N. Muncy, B. R. Nicewander, J. A. Repass, R. F. Richardson, H. T. Rudder, L. A. Smith, C. Tickle, J. N. Tickle.

## **BLAND COUNTY FAIR ASSOCIATION, INC.**

This association was probably organized in 1924 and was incorporated as a non-profit organization in the fall of 1954.

The annual fair has been held continuously throughout the years with the exception of three years during World War II.

The Bland County Fair has added tremendously to the "community spirit" of the county. The fairgrounds, located at Bland, was purchased by the association and deeded to the county. In addition to the fair, it is used for horse shows, cattle sales, picnic grounds, vesper services, baseball field, and as an extension to the playground for Bland High School.

This spot is the setting for the pageant, "Down Through the Years," commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of the formation of Bland County.

#### AMERICAN LEGION POST NO. 20

Miller T. Burton Post No. 20, American Legion, was organized in 1928. J. R. Stafford was the first commander; Rev. Clarence W. Taylor, adjutant; Herman B. Shufflebarger, treasurer; B. R. Nicewander, historian; W. H. Newberry, service officer; and Z. L. Painter, news correspondent. Other charter members were. Hilary P. Marshall, Minor Muncy, C. H. Kitts, George Allen, George W. Greear, David N. Shufflebarger, Sam V. Burton, and Tilden Lambert.

One of the major projects of the post was sponsoring Memorial Bridge across Crab Orchard Creek at Bland. This is known as the World War Memorial Bridge. It bears the following inscription: "To the sacred memory of the men and women who participated in the World War". The bridge was sponsored by the Miller T. Burton post in conjunction with the Board of Supervisors of Bland County. On the bridge is a name plaque listing 188 men and one woman from Bland County who served in World War I. The 12 men who were killed in action or died while in service are represented by a star after their names. This project was started in 1929 and completed in 1930.

In the early years, the post obtained from the U. S. Government 38 grave stones for deceased Confederate



veterans as well as a great number for World War I, World War II, and the Korean War veterans.

Over a period of years the post has given financial assistance to new churches that were under construction and assistance to local recreation projects for the youth of the county. It has for several years sponsored junior baseball clubs in the county; has sponsored the Boy Scouts; has given financial assistance to the widows and orphans of deceased veterans and helped them to receive help from other sources.

The post has helped many veterans to receive disability compensation and medical care in government hospitals. It has always participated in military funerals, anywhere, when requested to do so. It has helped a number of veterans and non-veterans to rebuild their homes destroyed by fire or other causes.

For the youth of the county, the Miller T. Burton Post has constantly sponsored contestants in the Oratorical Contest, scholarships to Boys' State, and school award medals. The post pays all expenses, including transportation, for one or more boys to Boys' State for one week, where they are taught the elements of state and local organization of government. The subjects used by the speakers in the oratorical contests are taken from the Constitution of the United States. The winner of each school is awarded a silver medal and the county winner is awarded a gold medal. The county winner has a chance in the district contest and may continue on to the state and national contests with prizes amounting to several thousand dollars.

The American Legion School Award Medals are presented to one boy and one girl in each school annually for outstanding qualities of citizenship. The boy who is the recipient of this medal must show outstanding courage, leadership, honor, scholarship and service. The girl recipient is distinguished for courage, companionship, character, service and scholarship.

## VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

The first and only Veterans of Foreign Wars post in Bland County was organized through the efforts of Daniel P. Earnest, Jr., Burl R. Nicewander (both Bland County residents), and Harry E. Lobban (a representative from VFW national headquarters).

Pulliam-Porterfield Post No. 8010, V.F.W., was granted a charter on July 15, 1946. This organization, composed exclusively of men who have fought America's foreign wars on land, sea, and in the air and founded in 1899, named its post in honor of Joseph B. Pulliam of Round Bottom (east of Rocky Gap), who, to the best of their knowledge, was the first Bland County serviceman to lose his life in World War I, and in honor of A. Roland Porterfield of Bland, who was the first to lose his life in World War II.

Commanders of the post through 1960 have been: J. T. Dunn, Jr., J. P. Newberry, Daniel P. Earnest, Jr., Claude S. Stowers, R. M. Muncy, John Nye Tickle and D. N. Shufflebarger.

## EASTERN STAR

### Bland Chapter No. 41

Bland Chapter No. 41, Order of Eastern Star, was granted a charter in May, 1922, in Bland, Virginia. Members from Electa Chapter in Roanoke were the organizing team, with Ollie Hope, Worthy Grand Patron of the Grand Chapter of Virginia, present. Miss Anna Muncy was the first Worthy Matron; W. S. Dunn, Worthy Patron; Mrs. Hazel Repass, Associate Matron; and Miss Ella Brown, Conductress.

Mrs. Hazel Repass is the only living charter member with continuous membership.

## Rocky Gap Chapter No. 154

The Rocky Gap Chapter, Order of Eastern Star, was instituted on January 23, 1954 by Eugene Bane, Worthy Grand Patron of the Grand Chapter of Virginia, assisted by Anna Massey Marshall, Past Grand Matron, and Robert Clarke, Past Grand Patron. The ritualistic work was exemplified by the Bluefield, Virginia Chapter No. 102, supervised by Edna E. Turner, District Grand Lecturer.

Officers installed were: Worthy Matron, Mrs. Edna Lambert; Worthy Patron, A. S. Hutchinson; Associate Matron, Mrs. Mabel Pruett; Associate Patron, Harold Pruett; Secretary, Levi H. Sands; Treasurer, Mrs. Pauline Hutchinson; Conductress, Mrs. Bobby Jo DeHart; Associate Conductress, Mrs. Ruby Preston; Organist, Mrs. Glorene Bird; Chaplain, J. Will Davis; Marshall, Mrs. Sadie Mauldin; Adah, Mrs. Jean Sands; Ruth, Mrs. Elizabeth Bradshaw; Esther, Mrs. Ola Mauldin; Martha, Mrs. Blanche Compton; Electa, Mrs. Dorothy Gilly; Warder, Mrs. Jessie Johnston; Sentinel, E. M. Davis.

The chapter was presented Charter No. 154 in January of 1955. In January, 1961, the chapter moved into the new Masonic Temple and now has a membership of fifty-two.

## FIRE DEPARTMENTS

In 1957 Bland County realized its dream for an organized volunteer fire department. J. P. (Pete) Newberry was elected as first chairman of this group of unselfish and outstanding volunteers. The fire truck is housed in a cinder block building near the jail at Bland.

A volunteer fire department was organized at Rocky Gap through the efforts of the Ruritan Club and a fire truck was purchased for this area.

## CHAPTER XV

### MISCELLANEOUS HISTORY OF BLAND COUNTY

#### AN EARLY BAND OF BLAND



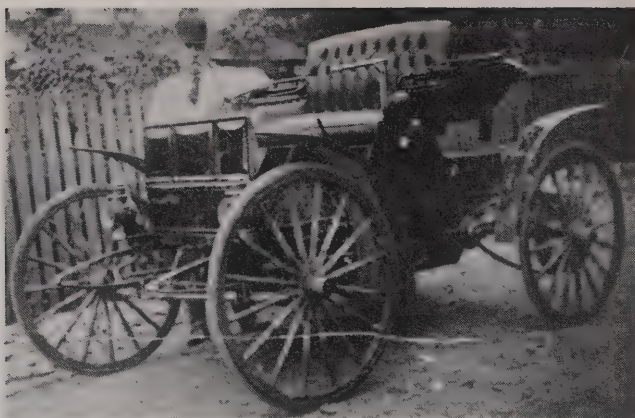
Standing, left to right: Sid Banks, Joe French, Newberry, Fayette Grayson, Sitting, left to right: Charlie Dunn, John Hedrick, Everett Thompson, Bruce Banks.

#### BLAND BAND 1910



Front row, Left to Right: Otto Greever, G. R. Repass, Sam Robinette, John Chandler, and S. W. Williams, Jr. Second Row: C. M. Dunn, M. L. Greever, Clarence Dunn, W. S. Dunn, and R. J. Mustard. Third Row: H. L. Suiter, J. H. Greever, J. T. Dunn, Guy B. Dunn, Dr. J. A. Wagner, George Robinette and N. C. Bruce.





**First car in Bland County — owned by Dr. Wagner, purchased from Sears and Roebuck, delivered at Wytheville, Virginia and put together there by Guy Dunn and Dr. Wagner and driven over the mountain by Dr. Wagner.**



**CRACKER'S NECK BASEBALL TEAM 1905**



Typical Mode of Travel in early 1900's.

THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS  
COMPANY 1388 P-53-VA., BASTIAN, VA.



The Civilian Conservation Corps program was initiated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on March 21, 1933, when he sent a message to Congress asking for passage of legislation which would permit him to take a vast army of young men from city streets and rural homes and give them healthful work in the conservation of natural resources. A bill carrying out the President's recommenda-

tions was made law March 31, 1933. Within two weeks after the passage of the bill creating the Civilian Conservation Corps, Headquarters of District Four was appropriately located in Richmond, the historic capital of Virginia. Col. K. T. Smith, then Chief of Staff of the 80th Division, was the first District Commander.

It was appropriate that the first CCC Camp was established in Virginia, the home of the first permanent English settlement in America, and on whose soil the final battle for independence was won. This camp, NF-1, Edinburg, Virginia, began work in the George Washington National Forest on April 17, 1933. After this beginning several additional camps were established in Virginia.

In the late spring of 1933, the United States Government chose from the Emergency Conservation Work to establish a CCC Camp in Bland County. Mr. W. J. Bruce leased approximately ten acres of land on a hill overlooking the town of Bastian to the War Department, Quartermaster Corps, U. S. Army, Third Corps Division, to be used for the construction of this camp.

It was on Sunday morning, June 4, 1933, that two hundred and twelve officers and men arrived at Bastian, Virginia, from Fort Monroe, Virginia. A large number of spectators had gathered to witness this memorable occasion and the arrival of the special train from Narrows, which was delayed. One of the delays was due to a large number of cattle on the railroad tracks outside the town of Narrows, as related by one of the first enrollees.

The officers and men occupied tents until permanent barracks were completed in December. These barracks remained until the camp was terminated on December 9, 1942. In addition to the six barracks, the camp consisted of a post exchange and recreational building, kitchen and mess hall, educational building which housed a number of classrooms, a woodworking shop and photographic darkroom, hospital, army officers quarters, forestry officers quarters, blacksmith shop, garage, bath house, library, army office (Company Headquarters) and supply room, forestry office, green house, paint storage building, and explosive storage building; and was rated as a "superior" camp in comparison with all of the camps in the U. S.

The camp was under command of the U. S. Army and was assigned to work with the Virginia State Forestry Service. In the nine years that Company 1388 was in Bland County, their major accomplishments, aside from the very important sociological and economic development, were: truck trail construction, tower construction, bridge construction, telephone line construction, and a certain amount of timber stand improvement demonstrations. Company 1388 rendered most excellent service in fire control in Bland and adjoining counties, especially during the exceptionally severe fire seasons of 1935 and 1936. The CCC in Bland County provided the Virginia Division of Forestry with the first opportunity to develop effective fire control and began a forest management program which reached considerable proportions in later years. In addition to providing employment during the depression for a great many enrollees, both local and from other points, these boys received many lessons of army discipline and a new concept of the importance of conservation of natural resources.

The army and forestry personnel rendered splendid cooperation in the educational program, offering vocational, health and job instruction. Fifteen different vocational courses were taught by capable WPA teachers employed mainly from Bland County. The camp also had outstanding volley ball, basketball and baseball teams. Religious services were conducted by Sub-District Chaplains and local ministers.

The U. S. Army personnel of Company 1388 consisted of a commanding officer, some of the first being Capt. Harris, Capt. Ashby Land, 1st Lt. Samuel McCrary, 1st Lt. James J. Nolan and 1st Lt. W. H. Gilmore; an adjutant, and an army medical officer. Each camp had an educational advisor and local teachers employed by WPA. Some of the local teachers were: Mrs. Grat Muncy, Mrs. Minor Muncy, Mrs. Minnie Wayne Peery, Mrs. Minnie Archer, and Mrs. Mary Porterfield.

The technical service staff was headed by a superintendent, the first being Eugene M. Davidson, who later became engineer and was replaced by J. J. Topper. Among the first foremen were: Charlie Eagle, Sam Suiter, Brown Johnston, Pyott Shrader, C. E. and J. B. Hildreth, Charlie



Burton, A. C. Bruce, O. W. Danner and Taulby Childress. Ira Dillman was the blacksmith and Gratt Shrader was the mechanic. A number of changes in personnel were made during the nine years of the camp.

The CCC camp was indeed a great asset in the development of Bland County and many of the enrollees of Camp Cherokee, Company 1388, P-53-Va., both local and from other sections of Virginia, settled in the county and have become leading citizens of their communities.

### **BLAND CORRECTIONAL FARM**

In June, 1946, the Commonwealth of Virginia purchased the Paul E. Bird and John Fanning farms on Route 42 at the extreme east end of Bland County and established its first regional jail farm, naming it Bland Correctional Farm. The idea behind this move was to provide a farm to which jail prisoners from Southwest Virginia could be assigned, with the thought that it would be beneficial both to the men concerned and the state itself for the men to serve their sentences where they could do constructive work rather than "lay" in jail.

The first buildings were U. S. Army surplus buildings purchased from Camp Pickett. They were dismantled in sections, transported to the farm on trucks, and re-erected to serve as inmate quarters, mess hall, laundry, store-rooms, guards' quarters, and office. The first complement of inmates consisted of a small number who were borrowed from the State Convict Road Force for the purpose of constructing the early buildings.

It was not until October of 1952 that the first permanent buildings were ready for use. A modern two-story cell-dormitory building to house the inmates, the water and sewage works, and the power plant were then placed in service. In 1957 a permanent guards' quarters was completed, and in 1958 the new laundry and the second permanent housing unit were completed.

The inmate population increased slowly from the beginning to the present except as new housing units were

opened, which permitted rapid increases. At the time of this writing there are 520 men who have been committed from 38 counties and 13 cities in Southwestern, Northern, and Northeastern Virginia. The average term served at this institution is approximately four to four and one-half months.

Several small farms have been purchased during the years and at the present time the farm encompasses 2,175 acres. Much is rough hilly land suitable only for woodland; however, ultimately there will be 550 acres of cropland and 1,000 acres of pasture. With the assistance of the U. S. Soil Conservation Service, a system of strip-cropping on contours has been utilized to good advantage on the hillside fields, using three-year rotation of crops. The agricultural program is rounded out by these approximate livestock inventories: 500 cattle in the beef herd, 500 plus swine, 80 dairy animals, and a poultry flock adequate for institutional needs.

Personnel now number 69 with an annual payroll of \$283,000, which is a sizeable factor in the economy of this largely agricultural county. Mr. W. B. Gordon is the present superintendent of the institution, having succeeded the first superintendent, Mr. W. R. McCraw, in August, 1955. Fifty-eight of the employees live in Bland County with the remaining eleven residing in nearby counties.

### AUNT EMMA CLAY



Born in 1855, Emily Ann Clay, better known as Aunt Em, lived with her family on the farm of Mr. Madison Allen. When she was eighteen, she came to live with Captain Henry Newberry and his first wife, Elizabeth Robinett Newberry. After the death of Mrs. Newberry, Aunt Em remained in the home as housekeeper and nurse for a large family of children.

When Captain Newberry married Laura Porter, of

Wythe County, in 1877, Aunt Em continued in the service of the family. She served as cook, nurse and devoted friend for the family of six children. After the death of Captain and Mrs. Newberry, Aunt Em remained at the Newberry home with the George Thompson family.

During the last fifteen years of Aunt Em's life, she was afflicted with arthritis which necessitated the constant use of crutches. This crippling handicap, however, could not dim her cheerful outlook on life or hinder the performance of her daily tasks, which were always in the interest of others.

Her life was the very essence of goodness, faithfulness and devotion. In her inimitable way, she wove her personality into the lives of those around her. Her personal influence, loving service, and wise judgment were a great inspiration to her family and friends.

Her death in January, 1937, was a great loss to our community, for Aunt Em was truly one of Bland County's most beloved citizens.

### GRIFFIN PAGE

"Uncle" Griffin Page, colored, had a blacksmith shop located where Hunting Camp Creek intersects with the highway at Bastian. He was a freed slave and his grave can be found in the Starks Cemetery at Hicksville.

He and his wife attended the old Hornbarger Chapel at Bastian where they always sat on the back seat. Old-timers of seventy-five and eighty years of age tell how they, as children, loved to crowd around the couple after church and talk with them.

Uncle Griffin's blacksmith shop was a favorite hang-out for little boys after school.

## JIMMIE SURAT



Perhaps one of the most colorful, unique and the undisputed oldest citizen ever to reside in Bland County was Jimmy Surat (pronounced Cert). He came to Bland County from one of the Carolinas. He was half Blackfoot Indian and escaped from the tribe while it was being forced, under government supervision, to move from the Carolinas to a reservation in the West. Many of the Indians died during the 2,000 mile march.

He moved to Bland and lived in a cabin on Brushy Mountain, north of a farm that was owned by H. McGinnis, which later became the property of Andrew Muncy. At the time he came to Bland, he was married to a woman whom the oldtimers remembered only as "Aunt Suze." After the death of "Aunt Suze," he married "Liz." To this union was born four children, one boy and three girls.



By a former marriage, "Liz" had a daughter named "Ol." Her favorite pastime was stealing horses from barns and riding through the woods at night. "Ol" finally left home and spent the rest of her life with Bransom Bullard, who was a former slave purchased from the auction block by Col. John R. Compton.

Jimmie Surat died at the estimated age of 120 years. Records indicate he registered to vote at Bland on September 15, 1902, and gave his age at that time at "about ninety." Jimmie never slept in a bed, always on a pallet in front of the fireplace. He died in 1915. H. McGinnis, Claude Richardson, and Miller Leslie hauled his body off Brushy Mountain in a two-horse wagon. His casket was furnished by Ess Mustard and paid for by the county. "Liz", his wife, rode on top of the casket from the home to the cemetery. He was buried in the Town Cemetery at Bland.

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